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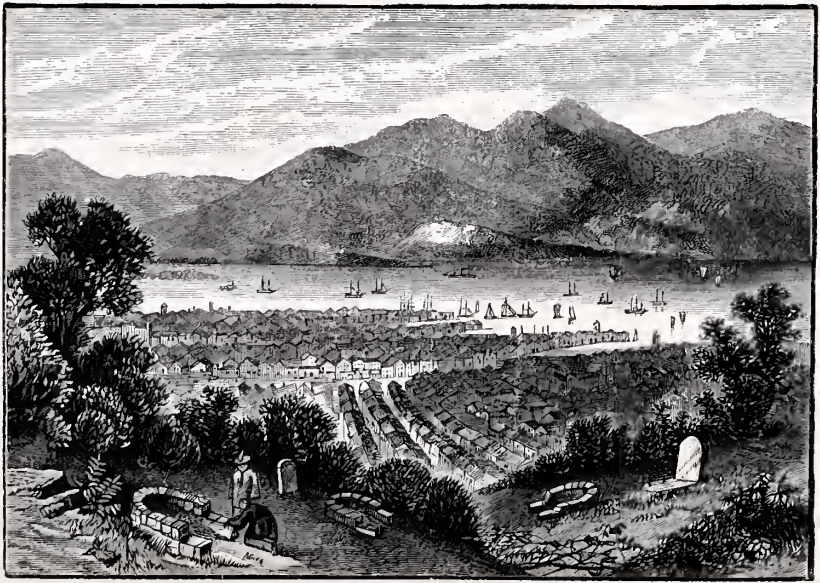

Amoy. Page 143.

CHOH LIN,

The Chinese Boy who Became a Preacher.

BY THE
REV. J. A. DAVIS,
AUTHOR OF THE "CHINESE SLAVE-GIRL," "TOM BARD," ETC.

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THIS BOOK

Is Respectfully Dedicated, without their Knowledge,

TO THE

REV. DRS. TALMAGE, RAPALJE AND KIP,

OF THE AMOY MISSION—

MEN OF WHOM THE REFORMED CHURCH MAY JUSTLY BE PROUD.

Their judicious, quiet, persistent, yet modest efforts for the temporal as well as spiritual good of those around them will, by the grace of God, live and grow to bless those in and around Amoy as long as the Chinese remain a people.

PREFACE.

THIS is a true story of a real Chinese boy who became a preacher. Choh Lin is, and has been, a preacher of the gospel for more than twenty years, and for most of that time connected with the Amoy mission of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America.

When the writer was living in Amoy he took down from Choh Lin's own lips the most of the facts here given, and since his return to America has written up the notes thus gathered, adding facts that came to him through other sources. So it is a true story. The real name of Choh Lin, for satisfactory reasons is not given.

Parts of the first chapters of this story were written for and published in *The Sower*, and at

the request of not a few readers it is completed and sent out in this form, with the hope and prayer of the writer that it may lead many of our young people to think of and to pray and work more heartily for, missions in China.

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CHOH LIN.

CHAPTER I.

THE CHINESE BABY.

ABOUT forty years ago there lived in China, in a little village standing on a bay of the ocean, a Chinaman named Sol Law Lee. The village in which Mr. Lee lived was at the foot of a mountain, and so was named Tay Soa, or "Foot Mountain." He was the richest man in the place and had the finest house there, yet if you had seen it you would have thought that it was only a number of out-houses for cattle, connected by two walls.

One day there was born in this house a boy-baby. Mr. and Mrs. Lee were very proud of their little son, and when the father met friends on the street or at his place of business he was glad to have them bow and, as they clasped and shook their own hands, say to him, "Ka li kiong-hi" ("unto you congratulations"). When the little fellow had lived a whole month his relatives and friends from the village and the other places around gathered at Mr. Lee's house to see the new-comer and to have a

grand feast in his honor, as well as to be present at the ceremony of shaving the child's head. Each brought some present for the little fellow or his parents. There were fowls and fruit and many other things to eat, and among them twenty duck eggs painted in pretty colors. Some had brought money; two or three brought silver rings, not for the fingers, but for the wrists and ankles of the baby: one of these ankle-rings had a tiny silver bell fastened to it to jingle when he moved his feet. His grandmother gave some clothing for him to wear and a queer little cap, beautifully embroidered with red and yellow silk, to put on his head. The visitors gave many presents, because they expected Mr. Lee, as he was rich, to give them many in return, and better, too, than they gave.

When all of the friends had enjoyed the first part of the feast, the little boy was brought into the room. He was not a beauty. His little head was covered with silky black hair; his nose was as flat and small as though his nurse had let him fall on it; and the little black eyes seemed to be looking down to see where the nose had gone. Around each wrist a red cord was tied, to keep the spirit of mischief from getting loose and making the hands do bad things when the boy grew up.

When the little child made his appearance one and another of the people said, "Pretty," "Very pretty," "Smart," "Brave," and other pleasant things for the parents to hear.

But now came the great event of the feast. A barber was brought in, and with his little three-cornered razor shaved off the hair from the baby's head, leaving it entirely bald. Of course this was not what the child liked, but Chinese babies must soon learn that grown people have strange ways. As the men and boys in China have all but the back part of their heads shaved, the little baby had to begin some time.

The Chinese do not shave their heads because they are heathen, but because the nation has been conquered by the Mantchu Tartars, who forced them to follow the Tartar way of shaving the head and braiding the hair.

When the barber had gone the father gave to the bald-headed little fellow a name. Since the first name given usually wears out or gives place to another as soon as boys are large enough to go to school, we will call the little boy by the name that was given him a few years after. This was Chhoh Lin: we will write it *Choh Lin.*

Three months after this "feast of shaving the child's head" invitations were sent out again to the relatives and friends. As before, they brought presents for the little fellow. Chief among these gifts were a red chair and some molasses candy. Does some girl or boy say, "I wish I were a Chinese baby if he can get plenty of molasses candy"? Wait and see how it was used. The candy was warmed and put on the seat of the chair, and then

the little fellow, dressed in his nice clothing, was placed on the candy in the seat. It was used to keep him from falling off!

But a more important ceremony took place at this feast. The presents were all placed before the image of the goddess of children. Mr. Lee bowed before this idol and prayed the goddess to take care of his little boy, to make him good-natured, to make him stay awake in the daytime and sleep well at night, to keep him from crying and to keep him well. When they supposed that the goddess had sufficiently enjoyed the presents, all were taken away and a feast made of those that could be eaten.

When Choh Lin's birthday came, then a greater feast still was prepared and more presents brought. After the friends had gathered, a large sieve was placed on the table before an ancestral tablet. This is a piece of carved wood standing in a carved block. Into this upright piece was cut the name of Mr. Lee's father, who had died many years before. The Chinese believe that the souls of their dead friends enter into these tablets of wood and live in them for a long while. On the sieve were placed some silver ornaments, scissors, ink and pen, a book or two, a money-scale, a small boat, tools, and other things. Then the little boy, dressed in a new suit of clothes, was placed on the sieve among the things. The Chinese think that whatever a child at this time first grasps will show the business he will follow when he becomes a man. Choh Lin took an

orange, so some thought that he would be a farmer, and others that he would like eating better than anything else.

At the feast following this ceremony the little boy had a dish prepared for him of which no one else was allowed to eat—a soup made from chicken feet. This soup was to make him walk soon and become a first-rate runner.

The little child was taken each time before the idols and the ancestral tablet, and made to hold up his hands and bow his head as if praying to them. Thus, when only a baby Choh Lin was made an idolater and a worshiper of the spirits of the dead. How could he help growing up a heathen? He was taught to serve these false gods only, and no one told him to say, "Our Father which art in heaven" or to pray to Jesus. Nobody living near his home knew about the true God; none had heard of Jesus; and yet it is but little more than forty years since Choh Lin was born.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHILD OF THE GODS.

WHEN Choh Lin had passed his first birthday his grandmother embroidered for him a red woolen cloth with bright-colored silk, yet when it was finished she did not give it to the little boy, but gave it instead to his mother. She took it to an idol temple, and from the incense-box or pot standing before the idol gathered some of the ashes made by burning incense to the god. This was carefully placed in the cloth, and then, rolling it up, she sewed the ashes tightly within. On the outside of this little bundle the name of the god was stamped. The package was then brought home and hung by a silver chain about the little fellow's neck. Choh Lin had now been consecrated to the idol. He might pray to other images, but his own idol must receive the first and most of his service. By carrying with him the incense-ashes his friends hoped that the child would get the god's spirit. The Chinese suppose that the spirit of the idol enters the ashes and lives there to do good to those who carry it. Not only was Choh Lin to be the child of this god, but the god was expected to take

care of the boy, to watch over him, hear his prayers and do him every favor that the child needed or the god could give. Though these bundles of ashes are not worn through life, yet they are usually not laid aside until, to the Chinese eye, they become quite unclean; and when the Chinese think a thing is dirty they are generally right.

When Choh Lin began to walk it was the cause of great rejoicing in the Lee household. As he toddled three or four steps without falling, one of the family took a large knife and, with the edge downward, cut down to the floor between his feet, and then again behind them, as though to cut something that hindered his movements. Of course the knife did not touch him, but was supposed to cut off some invisible cords that made him fall.

Choh Lin was not as strong a child as his older brother, Chi Lap, and the mother and father were very much afraid that their little boy would not grow to be a man. They thought that evil spirits were making their child weak, and would after a while kill him. To drive away the evil ones they determined on a ceremony that was supposed to have a great effect on a child's health.

Several priests were invited to the house, who made a kind of altar of the tables, one on the top of the other; and on the top one they placed candlesticks, censers and images of the gods, chief among them the goddess of children. On a table in another part of the room they placed several

plates with different kinds of meat, fruits and cakes. When all was ready one priest rang a bell, another beat a drum, another struck on cymbals, and all together chanted something which, with their music, was intended to invite a number of gods or goddesses of children to the house and to a feast. To describe the whole of the ceremony would take too long, so we relate only the last part of it, which is the most important. A framework to represent an open door was set up in the room. One of the priests, dressed to represent the goddess of children, stood beside this door and repeated some words to frighten the evil spirits away. While he was doing this Mr. Lee took up his little son and gathered his other children around him. Each of the children held a lighted incense-stick, and all were ready for the great ceremony of frightening the evil spirits so that they would not dare trouble Choh Lin again. Then one of the priests began blowing a horn, and, with this in one hand and a sword in the other, he slowly marched through the door. Mr. Lee, with Choh Lin in his arms and followed by his children, passed through the door after the priest, while the other priests made all the noise they could with bells, cymbals and drums. In this way they felt sure that little Choh Lin would be made well and strong. When this ceremony was over the frame through which the little boy was carried was cut to pieces and burned. This ceremony is called "passing through the door."

The Chinese probably think that by taking the sick child through the door during the frightful noises the evil spirits are kept back from the little one, and then when the door is destroyed they cannot find it to pass through in order to overtake the child.

Choh Lin's parents took another method of keeping evil ones away from their child. They called him "beggar," "dirty," "useless," because they hoped that the evil spirits, if they heard how the little fellow was spoken of, would think that no one cared much for him, and so would let him live: thus trying to cheat the evil ones.

On his second birthday Choh Lin was honored with another party, and children, especially those who would probably be his companions as he grew up, were invited.

Some months after his second birthday Choh Lin's older sister, a girl of ten years, became very sick. She was his best nurse, and he missed her very much. Whenever he could he would go to her room and try to coax her to get up and play with him. Doctors were called, and gave many and strange medicines. Prayers to the spirits of dead ancestors were offered, idol temples were visited, presents given to the gods, and many things done to drive away the disease, but the child grew worse. One day, when it became evident that she must die, she looked upward, and, with her hands reaching up, prayed, "O Heaven, do not take me

away from my little brother! Save me; let me live that I may watch over him. If I go away he will not have his sister to care for him." She pleaded to live, not that she might enjoy life, but that she might care for her little brother. Not long before she died she asked for Choh Lin, and when he was brought, "Who will care now for my poor little boy?" said she. "He is so weak, and young too! how can he get along without his sister?" Then looking up, as though to a greater than man, she said, "Heaven, take care of the little boy who must lose his sister. Father will die, and mother too must die. Please do not let the little brother suffer." Then she was still, and those who stood by her said, "She has passed on." She was dead. She prayed to heaven, but did not know of Jesus; she could not pray to Him of whom no one had told her.

As Choh Lin did not become strong, even though the grand ceremony of "passing through the door" had been attended to, his father and mother determined to try another ceremony. The fourteenth or fifteenth day of the eighth month is often observed in some parts of China as a day of special ceremony for the good of children. Sometimes this ceremony is observed on the birthday of a child, and occasionally too for the good of grown people when sick. The ceremony is called "worshiping the measure." This they decided to try. So on the fourteenth day of the eighth month a table was set in the house

with various kinds of food on it, and a square box for measuring rice. In this measure, which was half full of rice, a set of money-scales, a pair of scissors, a foot-measure and a small mirror of metal were placed, one article in each corner. A small wooden image to represent Choh Lin, an incense-stick, an oil lamp, a candle or two and ten chop-sticks were also placed in this rice-measure. When all things were arranged a single priest came into the room and chanted a form of words intended to win the favor of the gods, but more especially of the two gods of long life and prosperity. The things on the table were partly an offering to these gods, and partly to show the wishes of the people for their children. The priest was supposed to have an influence with these gods, and the offerings were designed to persuade them to give Choh Lin great favors, the two chief ones being long life and plenty of money. This ceremony is called "worshiping the measure" probably because these two gods are thought to hold the measure of years and the measure of wealth. There are many more things connected with this worship whose object the Chinese do not seem to understand. They perform these ceremonies, as they do many other things, because their fathers did so before them.

CHAPTER III.

A LITTLE BOY LOST.

THREE years of age! What a man Choh Lin felt himself to be! Three years had passed very slowly to him, though he did not remember much of them. He knew that he was no longer a baby, but a boy, halfway to being a man; that was enough. He walked around in his loose trousers and little coat as proud of his growing age and size as though he were a man already. He was glad to tell how old he was, but in this he did not differ from other boys the world over. Chinese are always willing to tell their ages. It has probably never happened in China that a young lady who has had more than thirty birthdays is not more than eighteen years old. Such things do seem possible in some other countries.

Just after the Chinese New Year, which occurs in our February, a man asked Choh Lin, "This year, how old?"—"*Five years*," said he.—How proud the little fellow was to hear the man say, "What! so old? You will soon be a man"!

Five years old? Did Choh Lin tell an untruth? He had not yet reached his fourth birthday; why,

then, did he say that he was five years old? But Choh Lin did not tell an untruth. According to Chinese methods of counting age, Choh Lin was five years old, though he had had only three birthdays and had not lived four full years. The Chinese do not reckon age by birthdays, but by the years in which a person has lived. Every one is a year older there on New Year's Day than he was the day before. All the Chinese "take their age" on the same day. It thus happens that infants born on the last day of the old year are two years old on New Year's morning, even though they have not been in the world twenty-four hours. When a Chinaman is asked how old he is, he understands the question to mean, In how many years have you lived?

After Choh Lin became thus "five years old" he thought that he was large enough to go around without having somebody to watch him. So, calling one of the large dogs, as he had often seen his brother, Chi Lap, do, he started for a walk. No one noticed him, and soon he was out of the place and had gone over a hill behind the village. Everything was strange to him, and he did not know which way to go. Strange men were walking in the field before him; he was afraid to go farther. Turning around, he tried to find the way home, but took the wrong course. The farther he went the more afraid he became, until he could not keep back the tears; then came the low cry, "Mother! mother!"

How he longed to be home! He forgot now that he would soon be a man; he was willing to be called a baby again if he might but reach home, where mother, father, brother and sister were. Afraid of the strange men, he neither dared go to them and ask to be taken home, nor even to cry aloud. He walked on and on, calling softly every few steps to his mother. By his side the large dog walked slowly, every little while looking into his young master's face as though he wanted to tell him what to do, but could not say it. After going for a long distance the little fellow sat down to rest. The dog lay down beside him. Tired little Choh Lin laid his head on the dog, and was soon fast asleep, and there he lay with the dog as a pillow for several hours.

Choh Lin had not been away very long before he was missed in his home. But as Chi Lap was away, it was supposed that the two boys had gone out into the streets for a while, and would be back by noon. When noon-time came Chi Lap returned, but not Choh Lin. Mr. Lee came in soon after, and was asked if he had taken his little boy out with him to his business. But Mr. Lee had not seen Choh Lin. The child was lost! No dinner was eaten. It seemed almost impossible that the child should have strayed away and not be noticed by anybody. A dark suspicion crossed Mr. Lee's mind. Perhaps somebody had stolen his boy! He sent all of his hired men and every one whom he

could get to search over the country and learn if any one had been seen carrying his child away. He himself, taking Chi Lap with him to be certain that no one stole his older boy, started off, away from the rest, to look for the child. Chi Lap called his dog to follow.

While the men were searching for Choh Lin the women of the household were rushing around from one neighbor's house to another asking if they had seen anything of the little boy. But the mother went at once to the temple and the idol to whom Choh Lin had been consecrated, and told the god her mournful story. She accused him of neglecting his child, and then begged him to bring back her boy or to tell the men where he was. She promised, if the god would see that the child was brought back that day, a feast should in due time be presented to the idol. After her prayers were completed she "drew lots" to see what the answer of the god would be. But when she drew the paper that was supposed to contain the answer, she was unable to understand its meaning. One character, or word, seemed to be the one meaning "find," and from this she at least hoped that the god's answer was favorable and the child would be found. With this hope she returned home. No Choh Lin there; no news about him.

We need not describe her sorrow nor yet the search of the men. After they had gone out of sight of the village and of Mr. Lee they separated

as he had told them, but each one moved slowly and lazily along. They went by various paths leading from the village, but the father and brother started across the fields, to reach by a short cut a village that stood on the water some miles away. Mr. Lee thought that if his child had been stolen, it had been taken to that town to start from there with some vessel. After going for several miles, and when not very far away from the village, Chi Lap's dog began to bark at some bird that he saw. His bark was answered by that of another dog in the edge of a grain-field.

"Oh, father!" said the boy, "that's Kailo, our dog. Let us go to him; it may be that Choh Lin is with him."

Chi Lap's dog barked in answer to the other, and ran toward the field of grain. Mr. Lee and his boy followed as quickly as they could, and there, just awakening from his sleep, was little Choh Lin with his head resting on his hand and his elbow on Kailo. The barking of the dog had awakened the little boy. Though Kailo wanted to go to meet his friends, he felt that it was his duty to take care of his young master first. Had the dog not stayed with Choh Lin, Mr. Lee might not have found his boy.

It would be hard to say who was the happiest at the meeting, but Mr. Lee lost no time in carrying the little fellow to his home.

Before many days the mother's promise to the

idol was kept and a feast set before him. Instead of eating the food themselves or giving it to the priests, the Lee family gave it, after the god had, as they supposed, feasted on the spirit of the food, to some poor people. These people, eating the first real good meal they had enjoyed for years, felt very thankful, so they said, that Choh Lin had been found, and they felt a wish—but this they did not tell—that he might be lost and found often.

That night his grandmother felt that Choh Lin ought to be taken to the temple to offer thanks himself to the god. Just after sunset she took some incense-sticks in one hand, and, leading the little boy with the other, brought him before the idol to whom he belonged. There she taught him to light the incense-sticks and set them in the box before the idol; and while they were slowly burning she told him to kneel to the god and with hands folded bow his head before the idol, to show that he was thankful for being saved. He tried to do as his grandmother bade him, and said not a word until they were going home from the temple. Then he asked, "Grandmother, did that god take care of me when I was lost?"

"Yes," said the old lady; "he is a good god for bringing our little boy back again to us."

"But why did he not keep me from going away, and then he need not have brought me back?" asked the child.

"You ran away of yourself, and the god watched

that you did not go so far that no one could find you."

"Could he not have watched me just as well at home? I was so tired, and that is the reason I did not go farther. Did the god make me tired?"

"No, but he showed your father where you were."

"Grandmother, it was Kailo that showed where I was; they were going past me."

"But the god may have told the dog to bark. The god did take care of you, anyway, while you were asleep."

"So did Kailo; I slept with my head on him. Grandmother, if dogs can take care of us as well as gods, why do we worship gods only, and not dogs too?"

"Do not talk so, my child. Dogs are only dogs. They die; the gods always live. Dogs do not understand when you pray to them, but the gods do."

"But dogs can run and bark and bite, too; gods cannot. They must stay where they are, like dead dogs."

"Choh Lin, you must not speak so; it is very wicked. What you see is only the idol that holds the spirit of the god. You cannot see a spirit. We worship not the idol, but the spirit in it. The spirit is like the wind; you cannot see the wind."

"But I can feel it."

"Not when it stands still. So you cannot see or feel the gods when they stand still. But you

must be careful not to talk wickedly about the gods; their spirits may be around you always, and if you speak against them they may hurt you; they may make you sick or do you other injury, or, perhaps, even kill you or some of your friends."

CHAPTER IV.

LEARNING TO WORSHIP IDOLS.

CHOH LIN'S father now gave strict commands that the little fellow must not be allowed to go into the street alone at all, nor would his father take the little boy along with him to his business, lest he stray away again and be lost. Choh Lin thought this very trying. He had not many things with which to amuse himself, and, as his brother was at school most of the day, he did not know in what way to spend his time. Sometimes his mother told him stories and helped to amuse him, and often she told him about the gods and taught him to worship them. She took him very often to the idol temple, and taught him to pray, to offer incense and food, and how to learn, as she believed, whether or not the gods heard and would answer his prayer.

There were in the temple several pairs of short roots of trees. These roots were flat on one side and round on the other, and both ends were nearly pointed. One way of finding out whether or not his prayer would be heard was to take a pair of these roots before the idol, and, after holding them together for a moment, let them drop to the floor. If they lay one with the flat and the other with the

round side up, his prayer would be answered; but if both lay with the flat side down, his prayer would not be granted; while if both lay with the flat side up, the god would not tell whether the prayer was to be heard or not. Sometimes when people worship in the temples, and the roots do not fall right the first time, they try again until satisfied that the god means to hear the prayer. Of course that is not exactly fair, but the Chinese do not always treat their gods fairly.

Mrs. Lee taught her boy another way by which he might not only learn the purpose of the god, but might get part of an answer to his petition. In the temple were many pieces of paper with a verse printed on each in red ink; there were also as many small sticks of bamboo-wood as pieces of paper. Each piece of wood was numbered, as were the papers. Mrs. Lee taught her little boy to take a number of these sticks, and, putting them into a long round box, to kneel before the god, and after bowing and offering his prayer to shake the box until one of the sticks fell out. The number on this stick would give the number of the printed paper, and the verse on that would probably give some answer, or tell what would be the answer, to his prayer.

Choh Lin was very willing to go to the temple, and often asked his mother to take him to worship the gods. She was glad to see her little boy show so much interest in the worship of idols, and hoped

that he would grow up to be a faithful worshiper of the gods of China.

At first the little fellow wanted to go to the temple because that took him out into the streets, and sometimes, when his grandmother went to the temple with him, she would take him for a long walk outside of the village after they had been to worship. He often talked of the gods and asked many questions about them. He cared more for the god to whom he belonged than for any other, and his mother, as well as his grandmother, sometimes grew tired of answering his questions or saying to him, "I do not know."

One day, as he and his grandmother were taking a walk, he saw, far away, smoke arising. He did not know what caused it, and as his grandmother had told him not to ask so many questions, he did not dare say anything about it, but kept thinking and looking and wishing that he could go to the smoke and see what was there. His grandmother and mother had told him that he must pray to heaven and that there were good beings in heaven; so he thonght at length that the far-away place from which he saw the smoke arise must be heaven, and that the smoke was caused by the people there cooking their rice for supper.

Some days after, when he was told that heaven would take care of him, he replied, "I am going there some time. I know where heaven is; I saw it the other day."

"You saw heaven?" said his mother. "How could you see heaven?"

"Oh, I saw it. It is a great way off, but I saw it with my eyes."

"You could not see heaven," said his sister; "no one can: it is too far away."

"Where did you see heaven?" asked his grandmother.

"I saw it away off back of the hills, near the mountain. It was so far away that I could only see the smoke," replied Choh Lin.

"See the smoke?" laughed Chi Lap. "He has seen the clouds in the sky, that is all."

"No, it was no cloud; it was smoke," answered the little boy. "I know that it was smoke, and the people of heaven were busy cooking their rice."

Chi Lap laughed louder than ever as he said, "You saw the smoke over the hills near the mountain; that is nothing but a limekiln, and men were burning lime there. Your heaven is not very far off, and it is not a very large place, either. If you pray to that kind of heaven, it will not do you much good. Limekiln-burners do not make a very good heaven."

Chi Lap's laughing and the smile on the faces of the rest of the family made the little boy feel ashamed, and he began to cry. His mother took him on her lap, and soon quieted him as she told him that heaven was not on this earth, but in the sky somewhere, and far above the clouds, where no

one could see it. To all of his questions about heaven she could only say, "We do not know much about it. It is a good place, and takes care of the good people on earth who pray to it."

Then she told him something that made the little fellow ask a great many more questions. "On the fifth night of the first month of the new year," she said, "heaven is opened and a beautiful angel comes out in the sky. This angel is clothed in red and is surrounded by light. Whoever sees this angel and asks any favor will receive what is asked for. Now, if you will stay up on the night when the angel appears, and ask a favor of heaven, you will get it." *

"Does the angel appear only once each year?" asked Choh Lin.

"Yes, only once, and he is not always seen when he does come. Somtimes he comes when people are all asleep."

"Why do they not stay up to see him?" asked the child.

"Because many do not care enough for heaven's favors; and, besides, not every one can see the angel when he does appear."

"Who cannot see him?" asked Choh Lin. "Could I see him?"

* This tradition, told by the subject of this story to the writer, is probably not known generally in China. There is in it something that reminds us, especially when we consider chronologies, of the angels' appearance in the sky at Bethlehem at the birth of Christ.

"Yes, I hope so," said his mother. "I think that you are good enough; you worship the gods and are quite a good boy."

"Why cannot some people see the angel?"

"Because they are bad. Good people may see him, and bad ones, looking at the same time, will see nothing at all. So my little boy must be good if he would see the beautiful angel and get favors from him."

"But, mother, can we see him if it be cloudy?" asked Choh Lin.

"Yes; he is so bright that he would shine through the clouds."

"Will he not hurt me? I am afraid to see him."

"No; he loves children if they are good."

"Did you ever see the angel, mother?" asked the little boy.

"No; I looked two or three times and did not see him, and then, when people said that I was not good enough, I thought that it was true and did not look again."

"You are good now. Why do not you look the next time the angel comes?"

"Perhaps I will, but grown people are not as good as little children who try to be good. If my little boy could see the angel he might ask him to make Choh Lin's mother better, as well as to give Choh Lin favors."

"I will, mother," said the child; "and do not

forget to tell me some days before the time, for I will try to be number-one good then. I want to see the angel and ask him for something."

"What will you ask for, Choh Lin?" asked Chi Lap.

"I will ask him to make Chi Lap good," said the little boy; "I think that he needs it."

Chi Lap did not like the laugh that his little brother's reply caused. He forgot that he had laughed at his brother a short time before. We forget if anything we say causes others pain; we do not forget our own pain so quickly.

CHAPTER V.

THE SICK FATHER.

YEARS go as quickly in China as in America for old people, and about as slowly for children. The first five years of Choh Lin's life were long ones, and to him it seemed that he never would grow to be a man. One day an old man told him that the boys who grew slowly became the strongest men, while those who grew up quickly were weak and died soon. This made the little fellow more contented, yet he would quite often stand by his brother and quietly measure to know whether Chi Lap was so very much larger. Chi Lap, who was several years older, seemed to the little boy to be almost a man already, and if he were as large he would be satisfied.

He was a proud boy when Chi Lap gave him a new top and said that he might play with the older boys. A ring was marked on the ground and several boys were invited to bring their tops to spin in the ring. After Chi Lap and two or three others had spun their tops, and one or two were left lying in the ring, Choh Lin said, "My turn now. Let me try." He had the string wound around the top,

and then threw it as he saw the others do, but it did not spin, and had to be left in the ring. Then one of the boys sent his own top into the ring and "pegged" Choh Lin's so hard that the new top was split. The little fellow began to cry. This counted him out of the game at once, for a Chinese boy who cannot see his top broken without crying is not allowed to play. The little boy went home resolving that he would not spin tops again if the big boys must peg his new one the first thing, and then not let him play at all after that. He was beginning to learn that to be a big boy brought troubles that little boys could not well bear.

Choh Lin had a little friend about his own age named Oan, whom he often visited. One day, as he came from worshiping the idol in the temple, he saw Oan, and while Mrs. Lee and Oan's mother were talking the little boys had a talk by themselves.

"I have been to the temple to worship my god," said Choh Lin. "What god do you have for yours, Oan?"

"I have none," said he. "Grandmother and mother do not take me to the temple every day. Sometimes they take me along on the first or the fifteenth of the moon, but I don't want to go often."

"I like to go," said Choh Lin; "I want the god to love me and take care of me and give me many things."

"Do the gods give you nice things? What do they give?"

"Oh, most anything you ask for, so mother says."

"Did they give you that new top that Jim broke the other day?"

"No; Chi Lap gave me that."

"What has your god ever given you?"

"He has not given much yet, but he will some day, mother says. She told me that the gods and the spirits have given my father all of his things."

"Didn't he buy them?"

"Yes, but the gods gave him the money or helped him get it."

"If the gods do that, then I mean to worship them too, and ask my father to worship them, for he told me that he had no money when I wanted him to buy me a dog. Did the gods give you your dogs?"

"No, they grew. Perhaps the gods did give them when they were very small, and the dogs grew the rest."

"How long will it take to get things that way?"

"I don't know; mother says we must keep worshiping, and then the gods will always be giving us good things."

"Come, Choh Lin," said his mother, "we will go home."

At home they found Mr. Lee lying down in the house. He had just come back from a business-trip

that had taken him several days. When his wife and little boy came in he said to them, "You must be very still, for my head aches very much and I have a fever. I am sick, very sick."

Mrs. Lee saw that her husband had a high fever, and sent for the doctor at once. Mr. Lee had never been so ill before. As soon as the doctor came Mrs. Lee met him at the door and told him that he must make Mr. Lee well soon or he would get no pay for his medicine and care; but if the sick man was soon restored to health the doctor should have good pay.*

Mrs. Lee was so anxious to see her husband cured that she did not ask about the price of medicine, but only that he be made well very soon.

When the doctor came to Mr. Lee's bed he sat down on a chair, and, putting on a very large pair of spectacles, took one hand of the sick man and then the other, to feel if there was much difference in the pulses of the two wrists.

"Yes," said he, "it is as I feared. The pulses are different, and there is a battle going on in the body. Some time, when you were busy or asleep, so as not to notice, the spirit of cold crept in, and

* When the doctor in China comes to see a sick person for the first time the friends, if not the sick one, sometimes ask how much it will cost to cure; and if the price be too much the doctor is requested to do it for less, or the people may send for another who will cure for less money. As the people pay for the medicines, they often demand the cheaper kinds and refuse to take those which cost much.

it is now fighting the heat in your body and trying to drive it out. It has taken its stand in the middle of the body, and is there fighting the two sides."

"But if there is cold in me, why am I so hot?" asked the sick man.

"Why," said the doctor, "that is the result of heat fighting with the cold. When men fight they become hot; so with your body—fighting makes it hot. A dead body is cold because its heat does not fight; in fact, it has been driven out, and the cold has taken possession entirely."

"If there be cold in me, why do I not feel it?" asked Mr. Lee.

"The cold is all on the inside, and has driven the heat toward the outside," answered the doctor. "Did you not feel chilly when you first became sick or just before? That was the cold entering your body. Now we must stop that cold, drive it out, or it will conquer the heat and you will die."

Mr. Lee felt too sick to ask any more questions, and let the doctor talk to Mrs. Lee. "He must have nothing cold to eat or drink, and he must be kept very warm; there must no wind blow on him and there must be no air passing through the room. He must be kept as quiet as possible," were the orders of the doctor; "and then, by the heating medicines I give him, the cold will soon be driven out or overcome, so that it cannot fight any more; then it can easily be removed."

He told Mrs. Lee to send some one around to his

shop soon, when the medicines would be ready, and told her to be careful to give them just as he directed, and, above all, to keep her husband very quiet. He promised to come again in the morning, and said that by great care he could cure Mr. Lee, but it would take much costly medicine and give the doctor a great deal of trouble and anxiety.

The whole family were forbidden to go into Mr. Lee's room, or to even open the door, lest more cold should find its way into the sick man's body and make the battle to drive it out all the harder.

Choh Lin thought it very trying that he could not speak to or even see his father, but his mother told him that he might help him very much by asking the gods to make him well. The little fellow felt very sorry, and when he went to bed at night determined to go very early to the temple the next morning.

Choh Lin was up early and on his way to the temple. The village was not large, and he had so often been to the temple that he could easily find the way. He did not wish any one to know that he was going, so he went out very quietly through a back door. On his way he thought of Oan and of what had been said the night before. His little friend was not up yet when he came to Oan's house; but, as his father had already gone to work, the door was open, and Choh Lin found his way to the little boy's bed and asked him to go with him to the temple to pray. Oan was soon up and ready.

Quietly the little boys slipped out of the house, and before long were in the temple.

Choh Lin had told of his father's illness, and when they were ready to worship he said to Oan, "Let me worship first. You can wait for your dog, but my father cannot wait. I want to get him well very quickly."

It was agreed that Choh Lin should pray first. Bowing before the god, he began: "O god, my father is very sick, and we cannot make him well. We do not know how, but you do, and you can cure him. Choh Lin, your little slave-boy, prays you to make him well very soon. We cannot do without my father; we have only one, and if he dies our hearts will not let us get another. He is good, and when he is well again we will give you many good things, and I think that he will come and worship you too. He has not had time to worship you, but mother and I have for him. Please make him well; please do not let him die, for Choh Lin's heart will die then; and you, O great god, do not want a boy whose heart is buried; please, then, make my father well."

When the little fellow had finished he turned to Oan and said, "Now I have done, but you wait a little, until the god thinks how to cure my father. You know a father is worth more than ten thousand dogs. Besides, dogs are plenty, and I have only one father."

For quite a while the boys waited; then Oan

said, "May I pray now, for I want a dog soon? The god can think when we are gone."

"Yes," replied Choh Lin; "gods do not need to think long."

Then, bowing as he had seen Choh Lin, Oan began praying to the idol: "O god, please give a poor little boy a dog. He has no money to buy one, and his father has no money either. You need not give a large dog; if it be only half as big as a kitten it will do; I will make it grow the rest. If you have more black ones than any other kind, give me a black dog, but do not give me a white one unless you want all the others. If you will give me a dog I will come often to the temple, and will bring the dog too. Please give a dog to Lo Oan, a poor boy who lives in Tay Soa."

After Oan had finished he asked Choh Lin, "Do you think I will get a dog now?"

"I do not know," said he; "you must pray more than once. But you must not tell the god that you will bring the dog to the temple; dogs cannot worship. It may be that gods do not like to have them there."

"Shall I tell the god that I will leave the dog at home?"

"Not now; next time will do. You must pray often, you know."

"Why? Cannot the god remember about the dog?"

"I do not know. Mother and grandmother say

we must pray often until the god does give what we ask for. If my father is not better, I am coming again to-day."

"I do not think that I will. I want a dog, but I do not like to worship too much for one. Somebody may give me one; then I will not need to ask the god. I wish that some one would. Let us go home now."

So the little boys returned home. They had prayed to a dumb and helpless idol, instead of to a real God. But it was the only god of whom they knew. Why did they not know about Jesus?

CHAPTER VI.

THE FATHER'S DEATH.

THE little boys reached their homes before any one missed them, and as they said nothing about going to the temple, none suspected that they had been there to pray. Choh Lin was told by his mother that his father was no better.

"Oh, he will be better soon," said the little boy.

"I hope that he will, yet I am afraid not. He is very, very ill. It is a bad fever. But why does my little boy think that his father will get well?"

"I know. He will get well soon; I know something."

"Has a fortune-teller said so?"

"No, mother. I will tell you. I went early to the temple and prayed to the god to make father well; and I am going again and mean to pray until he gets well. That is the way that you and grandmother told me to do."

"My heart's loved little boy!" said Mrs. Lee. "The gods must hear your prayer. You are good, and the idol will listen. Yes, pray, and pray often. But who went with you to the temple?"

"Oan and I went. He prayed too, but he did

not pray for my father. He does not go often, and I did not ask him to pray for my father, because the gods may not know yet who Oan is. Do the gods answer the prayers of those whom they do not know?"

"I think that the gods know everybody. But I must go, for the doctor is coming."

When the doctor came he saw that Mr. Lee was much worse. "Ah," said he, "the medicine is fighting very hard. There must be a great deal of cold inside; we must use stronger medicines." So he prepared a mixture of pepper and some other things that burn even worse, and told Mrs. Lee to give this mixture, with the other medicine, very often, and it would drive the cold out in time. The doctor then went away, promising to call again soon.

The new medicine only made the sick man worse. He became delirious, and every little while would say, "Cold water, please! cold water!" But no one gave the sufferer cold water. Sometimes, when he was partly asleep, he would call to Choh Lin, "My little boy, give your father a drink of cold water." The doctor's orders were strict; and, besides, as the Chinese think cold water is not good for well people to drink, no one would give it to a sick man.

Mr. Lee's friends came in, and seeing how ill he was said that another doctor must be called. As they could not agree on one, several were sent for. One said that this remedy must be tried, and another

that, yet the new doctors did no better than the old one.

Mrs. Lee and the grandmother went more than once each day to the temple to pray the gods to cure the sick man, and promised the idols a great feast and very many good things if they would make him well. Choh Lin usually went with them, and when he saw his mother cry and beg the gods to drive away the fever and not let her husband die, he would kneel down crying before his own special idol and say, "Please, Choh Lin's own god, do not let the little boy of your own heart lose his father. He is the only father I have, and if he dies there is no place where I can get another. Grandmother cries, mother cries, Choh Lin cries, Chi Lap cries, all cry, 'Spare him whom our hearts love.'"

But doctors, medicines, prayers, tears, did not stop the fever. Mr. Lee's friends felt very sad when they thought that he must die, yet there were not a few in the village who did not care. Some said, "It is plain that death wants somebody from the village, and if it is not Mr. Lee it will be one of us. So if he is taken we shall be spared the longer." It was not that they wanted the sick man to die, but in China people care for self rather than for others, and think when death is trying to get some one else he will let them alone. So far do they carry this selfish idea that often they will let a man who falls into the water drown rather than pull him out. They fear that by pulling him out they

will rob Death, who will get his pay by killing them.

Some who were glad that Mr. Lee was likely to die were those who owed him money; they thought that if he died they would get clear of paying their debts. Some, too, thought that in the confusion attending his death they might be able to take some of his property without being noticed.

At length the doctors gave up all hope; they said that if they had been called before they would have saved the sick man's life, but it was too late now. And the one who had been called first said that he knew Mr. Lee would die as soon as those men who knew nothing about the disease took him in charge to dose him with their worthless remedies.

Choh Lin's mother and grandmother could not give up yet. Each resolved to try once more to "bring back the spirit of the sick man," as they said. The grandmother, taking the little boy to the temple, told him to pray to his own idol while she worshiped another. Lighting a large number of incense-sticks before the idol and kneeling before it, she told the god that her son was sick, and that he must be made well or there would be a great deal of suffering in the village; not only would his family suffer, but many of the people would suffer and be unable to give incense or food or any good things to the gods; so they too would suffer. Then she begged the god to allow her to take with her a curiously-shaped utensil, looking somewhat like an

arrow, on which were the characters—that is, Chinese words—for "command." This would mean, if in the room of the sick man, that the god commanded the disease to leave. This utensil was to be hung up in the sick room and worshiped as though it were an idol. When the old lady supposed that her prayer was heard, and that she might take what she asked for, she took the utensil from its place, and, calling Choh Lin, started for home.

As soon as the little boy and his grandmother came home, Mrs. Lee, taking Chi Lap, went to the temple. Here, at her request, two priests were waiting. They had with them the coat that Mr. Lee had last worn, a small mirror made of metal brightly polished and a pole of bamboo-wood freshly cut, with leaves yet green at the top. A stick, fastened by a string to the top of the pole, was put into the coat for arms; then above it, and just high enough to represent the head of a man wearing the coat, the mirror was fastened to the string. When everything was ready the priest gave the pole to Chi Lap, who held it over his shoulder. Then a priest rang a bell and called Mr. Lee's name, and repeated some words supposed to have power to bring the spirit of the man who had worn the coat back to its place. After the priest had repeated these words and performed several ceremonies that need not be told here, the coat was hurriedly taken to Mr. Lee's house, and, as he was too weak to have it put on, the coat was laid over him on the bed.

The object of all this was to call back the spirit, which was supposed to be leaving Mr. Lee's body. The poor man understood the meaning of it all, though he seemed too weak to speak, and he only tried to shake his head. After a while he motioned to his wife to come to him. He whispered, "Bo law eng; kau si-mia e law be" (There is no road to use; I have arrived at life's end).

The delirium and fever had passed away; so had his strength, and Mr. Lee knew that he must die. For a few minutes his strength came back a little, and he called his two boys to his bed. Looking at them, he said, "My boys, your father has been to a land where it is very hot, and there was no water there for him. He asked the people to give him one drink, only one taste of cold water, but they would not. Two looked like his own Chi Lap and Choh Lin, but it could not be; they would not let their father die for want of a drink of cold water. But no one would give it, and the fever-fire has burned his spirit loose. It must go soon, but where he does not know. When it has gone his boys must not forget to place food and water where it may get them. I do not wish to go; I wish to stay and care for my boys and for all. But it is too late now. It is all dark, dark! Let me sleep."

They stooped over him; they called his name, but he did not answer, he did not notice them. "He is asleep," said one. Yes, he was asleep, but it was the sleep that does not waken. His breath-

ing was slower and slower until it stopped, and Mr. Lee was dead.

For a few moments they stood around the dead man in silence, hoping that he was asleep, until Choh Lin's grandmother stooped over the bed and listened; he did not breathe. She started back with the cry, "My heart has passed away! my heart has passed away!"

Sad was the lamentation of the old mother; more touching still were the cries of Mrs. Lee when she knew that she was a widow. She begged his spirit to come back, to speak just once more to her, and besought it not to leave her alone as a bird in a cage with no hand to keep her from starving. How should she now care for the little fledglings in the nest? Soon they would call for food, and she must hear their cry, unable to feed them. She little thought how like a prophecy these words would prove.

When it became known that Mr. Lee was dead the friends in the house began to cry and lament their loss. They had reason to mourn, for they had no good hope of meeting the dead loved one again. As Mr. Lee said, it was all dark, dark to them. No gospel to light death, no Jesus to give light to the grave. That darkness is awful.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FUNERAL.

AS soon as the mourners became more quiet, candles and incense-sticks were lighted and placed by the side of Mr. Lee's body. The Chinese believe that all is dark in the spirit-world, and that the spirit does not know how to find the path; so, as soon as possible after death, candles are lighted to show the way. The incense is meant as worship to the spirit. The people worship the spirits of the dead somewhat as they do idols, only they treat the spirits with much more respect than they do their gods; they fear and love them more.

The next day, when the body was prepared for the coffin, the whole family assembled in the room in which it lay. Chi Lap, who had been told what to do, took a cup of wine, and, kneeling before the dead, three times placed the cup to the lips of the corpse. After this he took, with a pair of chopsticks, some cooked food from a bowl and offered this three times, and again he did the same with boiled rice. While he was thus offering drink and food to the dead all the rest, except Mrs. Lee and old Mrs.

Lee, kneeled around the body and with loud cries mourned their loss.

After this another ceremony was performed. A paper sedan-chair, an imitation of the real ones in which the Chinese ride, and four imitation chair-bearers, or men to carry the sedan, made of paper, were placed on the ground in front of the house, and four cups of wine and eight small cakes—real cups and wine and real bread—were put near them. When all was ready for the ceremony Chi Lap set fire to the paper men and sedan, while two priests who were present recited a prayer, keeping time with brass cymbals.

The people suppose that these paper men and sedan-chairs, when burned, become spirit men and chairs in the next world to carry the soul of the one they mourn. The wine and bread are for the use of the chair-bearers. They are expected to get the spirit of the food in the other world. A paper house with paper furniture, paper clothes and everything that the soul was supposed to need in the other world were burned also.

Lest the reader should grow tired of these ceremonies, we will pass over the rest of them.

Little Choh Lin did not understand their meaning, nor did he quite understand why his father was put into the coffin. He had never seen so much done at any other funeral, and could not see why it should be done for his father. He asked his mother if it was because his father did not worship the gods

as much as other people that so much must be done for him when dead. His mother told him that his father was a good man, and because he was good and had left money to do it with, they could have so many ceremonies.

"But, mother," asked the little fellow, "does not my father grow tired of so many ceremonies? I would. He said, 'Let me sleep' when he died, and the priests and people will not let him sleep. Their noise will disturb him. Shall I tell them to stop?"

"No, my boy," said Mrs. Lee, "it will not disturb him. Noise does not trouble spirits as it does us. Besides, all this crying and mourning will tell the spirits how much your father was loved and how much he is missed now. They will think that he was a great man in the world, and will treat him with respect."

"Mother, if father was such a good man, why must he die?"

"I do not know, Choh Lin. It was the will of heaven—heaven knows."

"Why could it not be the will of heaven that some bad man should die? There are many such men."

"Choh Lin must not ask such questions. We cannot tell why heaven takes away good people who are loved and leaves bad ones who are hated."

"What is heaven, mother?"

"I do not know. Heaven is above us, whence

good things come; the sunshine, rain and other good things live there."

The Chinese often talk about heaven, yet when asked where and what heaven is they seem, like Mrs. Lee, to know very little about it. Perhaps the first fathers of the Chinese learned from prophets, or from the Bible, or from God himself, that heaven is God's home and the place where every good is; but when the people turned to idols they lost nearly all the knowledge they had about God and heaven.

When the body of the dead man was put into the coffin the lid was fastened down tightly and every part of the coffin made air-tight with cement. Then, instead of burying the dead a few days after death, the body was kept for a number of weeks in the best room in the house. The Chinese keep their dead so long before burial because they think that it will seem like wanting to get rid of their friends if they hurry the bodies off to the grave. They regard it a disgrace to have the funeral too soon.

When the time came for Mr. Lee's funeral, the relatives and friends gathered at the house to join the procession to the grave. No address was given, no prayer offered, no hymn sung, because it was a heathen funeral. The coffin was placed on a bier carried by ropes fastened to poles that were borne on the shoulders of men. An offering was then made to a god in the hope that he would take care of the soul of the man whom they were about to

bury. After the offering the bearers took up the bier and started for the grave. Before them went men blowing instruments of music, and following the coffin was a covered sedan-chair carried by two men, in which was a little wooden tablet. After the sedan came Choh Lin and Chi Lap on foot, and Mrs. Lee and the grandmother riding in sedans. Then came the rest of Mr. Lee's family and his friends on foot. All of these relatives were crying and mourning with loud voices. For a few moments the noise would be less, then all would burst into tears again and mourn louder than before.

Choh Lin and Chi Lap, as also their mother, grandmother and sister, wore over their clothing long coarse sackcloth cloaks of a grayish-white color. These coats had hoods that covered the heads all but a small part of the face, and long sleeves that almost hid the hands. Others of the relatives wore these coats, but only the nearest relatives wore the hoods.

The grave was on the side of a hill, and was lined with cement. Into this grave the coffin was lowered, and then, when all others had moved back, Chi Lap came forward and bowed toward the coffin three times until his face touched the ground. Next came Choh Lin, then Mrs. Lee and the grandmother, afterward the daughter, and last the other relatives, each in turn bowing with face to the ground.

At the end of this ceremony of worshiping the

dead, Chi Lap took the tablet that had been carried in the sedan-chair, and, while all of the rest kneeled, placed it at the head of the grave, and then, kneeling too, he said, "Let the flesh and the bones return to the earth again, but let the spirit enter this tablet."

The grave was closed with cement, and the friends, taking the tablet in the sedan-chair again, returned to the village. The tablet was placed in a room in Mr. Lee's house near those of his father and grandfather. The Chinese suppose that one spirit of the dead person at the grave enters this tablet and lives there; so they treat these little pieces of wood as though they were real persons. They place food and drink before them; they offer incense to them; they worship the wood and pray to it: they say, however, that they do not worship the wood, but the spirit in it. So powerful do they suppose a spirit becomes after death that sometimes, when a man wishes to take terrible vengeance on an enemy, he kills himself. He thinks if he is a spirit that he can make his enemy suffer far more than if he remained in the world in a body,

No one seems to know how the Chinese first got the idea of worshiping the spirits of the dead. Very many do not worship idols; many laugh at the gods, but none laugh at the worship of the spirits. There are several stories told by the Chinese about the first worship of the tablets, and we will give two of them in a few words:

Ancestral Tablet. Page 58.

More than two thousand years ago, as a noted prince was traveling with some of his people through a woods, all the food was eaten, and no more could be got. One of the servants of this prince—so the story goes—to save the great man's life cut a piece of flesh from his own thigh and had it cooked for his master. The prince was saved, but the poor man, unable to walk, was burned to death by a fire that was kindled in the woods. The prince afterward had a tablet made in memory of his faithful servant, and to this he offered incense and worship.

The other story is, that a little boy, who had been very disobedient to his parents, afterward became very good to them. His mother one day, when taking food to him in the field, fell over a root of a tree and hurt herself so badly that she died of it. The boy took this root and made images of his parents and worshiped them. Do you think the Chinese foolish? But they do not know any better. Why?

CHAPTER VIII.

CRUEL RELATIVES.

AFTER the funeral Choh Lin missed his father very much. While the body remained in the house the little fellow seemed to think that the dead man was asleep and would awake again; but now, since the room in which the coffin had stood was empty, he longed very much to see his father. Mr. Lee had been very fond of his sons, and Choh Lin was his special favorite. It was not merely the petting and the good things given him by his father that the little boy missed; he wanted to see him again because he loved him.

One day, shortly after the funeral, Choh Lin asked, "Mother, when will father come back? I want to see him."

"He will not come back, Choh Lin," replied the mother.

"Not come back at all? Can I not have my father any more?"

"No," said Mrs. Lee; "you have no father now, I no husband. He has left us alone."

"We are not alone, mother. You are here, I am, Chi Lap is, and so are grandmother and my sister; father only is gone. Where has he gone?"

"He has gone away into the spirit-world, never to come again to his family."

"Can I not see my father again? Why did he go and leave his little boy behind him? Why did he not take Choh Lin too? Can I go to him?"

"No, no, my little boy; you must stay with me. You do not wish to die, do you?"

"What is it to die, mother?"

"It is to be put into a coffin and be buried in the ground, and go alone into the gloomy desert of the spirit-world, there to be without friends, clothing, food—without anything—unless people in this life care for your wants."

"Has my father no home nor food where he is?"

"No, none but what we give him."

"Then if we do not take care of him he will be hungry and will starve. Poor father! What would he do if we could not take care of him? What will he do, and what will we do, when we die? If no one should feed us in the spirit-world would we die?"

"No. Spirits cannot die. They shiver with cold, they grow hungry and thirsty, they are lonely, they starve, but cannot die."

"Mother, did father have more than one soul?" asked Chi Lap, who had just come into the room. "You say that his soul is in the spirit-world, yet the soul at the grave came into the tablet that we brought home with us."

"My boys," said the mother, "each body has

more than one spirit—we do not know, surely, how many: one goes into the dark world, another into the tablet, and another stays at the grave. We cannot see into the spirit-world."

Not long after the burial of Mr. Lee the friends and relatives of the dead man came, as they said, "to settle up his accounts with themselves." As her husband's business had been so large, and Mrs. Lee was unable to carry it on, or even to settle it, she was glad to have help. But the men said that they could attend to it without any help from her. Each one knew how his own account stood, and all of them together could arrange the whole very easily.

Men whom Mr. Lee had helped in business came, and, presenting bills, said that Mr. Lee owed them large sums of money. Others to whom Mr. Lee had lent money when asked for it said that he owed them very much more than they owed him. These knew that Mrs. Lee was not able to defend herself or take care of her property, and that her boys were too small yet to go to law with them; so they thought that it would be an easy way not only to get rid of paying debts, but of getting part of Mr. Lee's property.

The relatives who had charge of the business made these men give them a share of the money which their bills demanded, and then settled with them. Thus, instead of Mrs. Lee getting the

money that was owing her husband, she lost it and more besides. In this way nearly all of the money that Mr. Lee had left for his wife and children was taken from them.

Men who had worked for Mr. Lee brought in large accounts that they said had been unsettled for many months. The relatives did not care to look for receipts among Mr. Lee's papers; if these men only gave them a large part of the money, the accounts were paid.

When all had been paid, not only was the money all gone, but much had been borrowed. These relatives had lent it themselves or borrowed of others, and they said that the property must be sold to pay back this money. Mrs. Lee tried to stop them, and said that they were cheating her and Mr. Lee's children. The men became very angry and threatened to turn her and her children out of doors. Mr. Lee's property was theirs, they said; they had advanced money to pay off his debts, and they meant to have that money back again. Besides, Mr. Lee, they said, had owed them for many years, and they had waited for their pay until he was able to give it.

Mrs. Lee saw that these men meant to rob her of all her property in one way and another, and that she had no one to help her; so she determined to take the control of her affairs in her own hands. She tried to send the men away, but they would not go; she tried to take the business out of their con-

trol, but they would not give it up; she tried to learn about the business, and even that they refused to tell her.

There are laws in China, and officers of government to see that these laws are obeyed, but a little money given to these officers usually saves the offender from punishment. There are roguery and cheating in our own land, yet this is really the place for honest people; but rogues are as plenty in China as honest men are here, and that means that there are very many of them.

All that Mrs. Lee could do only made matters worse. A woman in China has little hope of getting her rights before the mandarins (Chinese officers), and very seldom does a woman appeal to them. The only way that Mrs. Lee could take to drive away these relations of her husband was to call on her own father's family to help her. They lived far away from Tay Soa, and she was left to help herself. The people in the village might have pitied Mrs. Lee, but they said, "It is not our business; we will only get into trouble ourselves by helping; these men will bring a false charge against us to the mandarins, and we will receive harm ourselves, while Mrs. Lee will get no good." So the poor woman was left to the rascality of these men, who took away all the property that Mr. Lee left his family.

His boats were seized by these men, who pretended to own them, or were sold to others to pay

the debts that it was said were on the property; all the rice in the rice-shop had been stolen by these relatives; the lumber in the lumber-yard disappeared, no one seemed able to tell how; and several rice-fields, his relatives said, belonged to their family. In this way all the property, except the house in which Mrs. Lee lived and the furniture, was taken away, and she was left without anything to support her family.

In her anxiety to save something for her family Mrs. Lee partly forgot her grief at the loss of her husband; and now that she must do something at once to get food for her children, she had no time to mourn. Unable to punish those who had robbed her, the poor widow hated the unjust men all the more. She determined to be revenged on them in some way, and taught her boys not only to hate, but to think of punishing, the men who had taken their property.

One day, as the family at their scanty dinner were talking of some way to "get even" with the rogues, Mrs. Lee said to Choh Lin, "You can pray your god to punish them. Ask him to send sickness and death to their families—to make the rain destroy their crops or the drought to kill their rice. Ask him to send robbers to steal what they have or to make the mandarins catch and shut them in prison. Your god ought to take your part and punish those who rob you."

"You can pray to your father's spirit to bring

sickness and loss and death to their families," added the grandmother.

"I do not believe that my father's spirit would do it," replied Chi Lap. "He would not let us fight the boys who hurt us when he was alive, and I do not believe that he will harm people now."

"But you can pray him to help you get back the property that those rogues stole from you."

"Can my father's spirit help us, grandmother?" asked Choh Lin.

"Certainly," replied the grandmother.

"Then why must we give his spirit food, clothing and other things?" inquired the child.

"Because he does not know yet where to find such things in the spirit-world," answered the grandmother. "But you need not ask many questions now." The old lady was afraid to hear the boys ask questions about the spirit-world. The Chinese believe so many foolish things that they do not like to be catechised about their superstitious notions.

Mrs. Lee found it very hard to get food for her family, and more than once not only she and the grandmother, but the children too, were obliged to go hungry to bed. She thought one day that she would try to sell her large house and buy or rent a small one, and have enough money left to support her family for a long time. She asked a man if he knew of any one who wanted to buy a house. This soon came to the ears of the relatives who had robbed her, and they were afraid that she would sell

and go away with the money; so some of them came at once to forbid her selling the property. She had no right to do it, they said. Mrs. Lee gave sharp answers in reply. They told her that if she tried to sell they would at once drive her out of the house and take it themselves. A few days after they heard that she meant to dispose of the place, and several came as soon as possible to "see about it." The result of all was that they drove Mrs. Lee and her family from the large house and made her take a much smaller one that, they said, belonged to Mr. Lee. The large one they took possession of, as they professed, for Mr. Lee's children.

But this did not end the cruelty of these men. They wanted an excuse to keep the house. They dared not rob any more. Besides, they were afraid that if they took the house they might be obliged to support the children and widow. Only one way seemed open to them: they would have Mrs. Lee marry again, and then as a wife in another family they could say that since she had deserted Mr. Lee's relatives they were not obliged to care for her and she had no right to his property. They knew that if she did marry she would keep her children, and then, on the plea that the children had been adopted into another family, these relatives would claim the property.

One day a number of Mr. Lee's relatives came to the house where Mrs. Lee was living and pretended to be anxious about her welfare. They said

it was a pity that her husband had left his business in such a bad condition. They did not believe that the men who settled it had done the very best with the property, yet it was too late now to remedy that. Nor was it just that those men should keep possession of the large house; yet, as they were many and had great influence, it would be safer to say little about it now. They were only keeping the house for the children; as soon as the boys became men it would be given back to them. Besides, that house could not be sold out of the family; it stood not on Mr. Lee's ground, but on that belonging to the whole family. They were poor themselves and unable to aid the widow, though they would gladly do all in their power to help so good a woman. Gradually they turned the conversation until one of them said to the other, "If a young and rich man, good enough, could be found to marry our sister here, how fortunate it would be for her and her children, who otherwise may suffer!"

"Oh no," said the other; "it would not do to think of her marrying and leaving the family. We cannot let her go."

"But she need not leave our family," replied the first. "She is too much one of us to be lost by marrying again."

In this way they tried to find out whether the widow would be willing to marry; but as she said nothing and acted as though she did not hear, one asked her what she thought of Ian's plan.

"What plan?" asked Mrs. Lee.

"Ian thinks that if you could find a good and rich husband to take care of you and the children it would save you a great deal of care and suffering," replied the man.

"I do not want a husband; I never mean to marry again. No woman can find more than one good husband, and few find even one in this world. Their father," said Mrs. Lee, pointing to the boys, "was a good man. He was the only good one in this place, or some one would have cared for a widow who had no friends. No, I will never have a husband again."

The men soon found that it was useless to talk gently about her marrying, and they began to say that she must get a husband.

"I have a husband, and I love him yet," said she firmly. "His body only is dead; his spirit lives, and I will go to him some day, but it shall not be from the house of a stranger."

It was useless to reason with her about her children. "I will take care of them," said she, "if I must give my life to do it. If we must starve, we will starve together. Cruel relatives can then think that they killed us; for what have they done but rob his children of the food that he gathered? Vengeance will come some day. If through the skeleton gate of starvation we must go to the spirit-world, we will come back again. The robbers of the widow and fatherless will then find them-

selves robbed, and none can find that which will then be taken away."

The woman's manner and words frightened some of the men, and they were ready to let Mrs. Lee take her own course. But two or three more desperate ones determined not to be baffled. They would not let a woman conquer. They told her that she *must* marry. She might as well yield first as last, for they were men, and many too, while she was only a woman, and one alone.

"If I am only one and but a woman," said Mrs. Lee, "there is one thing I can do: I can die a widow."

Angry beyond control at her determination, one of the men caught up a heavy iron hoe and struck Mrs. Lee on her head. Without a word or a cry, only uttering a low moan, the poor woman sank to the floor. Pale, silent and motionless she lay there.

"She is dead, dead; you have killed her," cried the daughter.

"My child! my child! are you dead? are you dead?" moaned the old grandmother as she bent over Mrs. Lee. "Have I lost my last and best? No, do not go.—O spirit of my child, come back! come back! My light, go not out; leave me not in darkness."

When the men saw what had been done they were frightened, and hurriedly left the house, and as soon as possible the village.

For a moment Choh Lin looked at his mother,

then at his sister and grandmother, and when he saw them kneeling beside his mother and mourning for her, he too began to cry. Chi Lap's first thought was to strike the man who had struck his mother, but as he saw them all run away he kneeled beside his grandmother and asked, "Is mother badly hurt?" He could not understand that death could come so suddenly.

"Badly hurt, poor child?" said the grandmother. "She is dead. You have no father, and now no mother, and my last child is gone."

"No, she is not dead," replied Chi Lap. "See, she moves; she is alive.—Mother! mother! do not die! do not leave us!"

Mrs. Lee was not dead, though very dangerously wounded. For some time she was senseless, but after the blood had been washed from the wound and the injured woman laid on a bed, she slowly recovered her senses. For several days it was uncertain whether she would live or die, but, being a strong, healthy woman, she passed the time of danger and gradually grew better. It was some weeks before she was entirely well.

CHAPTER IX.

SEEKING A LIFE-GIVING GOD.

THE cruelty of these relatives made a great stir in the village, though the mandarins took no notice of it. Perhaps they thought that as Mrs. Lee was poor they would get no money for punishing her enemies. No one made complaint to them, so that they were not obliged to attend to the matter. If the officers in China took notice of every case of cruelty, they would find far more to do than they have now.

The elders of the village, however, felt that these relatives had gone too far, and if not stopped might actually murder the poor woman; so they forbade the men abusing her any further, but allowed them to keep their ill-gotten property.

The elders of a Chinese village have authority something like that of parents in our country, though they are not government officers. The robbers knew that if they disobeyed the elders a complaint would be made to the mandarins, and then much of the stolen property must be surrendered to save them from punishment. After this Mrs. Lee

and her family were not troubled so much, though by no means free from little annoyances.

Mrs. Lee was very grateful for her recovery, and looked upon it as life from the dead. She believed that some god had restored her to life. This god she determined to find—to make him her own, and then teach her family of him. But who was the god? Where was he worshiped? What temple had been built in his honor? Often she asked herself these questions, and in every way possible tried to find out. She talked to her friends in the village about her recovery, and told them that she believed there was somewhere a greater god than she had known before, who had brought her back to life again. She asked them to tell all they knew of the gods of their own and other countries, but they could tell little more than she knew already. "Perhaps," said one, "there is a greater god in our land than we know, and he may be worshiped in some temple far away from Tay Soa."

She learned of a number of temples, some many miles away. Saying nothing to others, she started one morning alone to find one of these. It was a long, weary walk, but when, near noon, she reached the place, she found the same gods worshiped there that she had known in Tay Soa. She prayed and offered incense to them, yet in her heart felt that they were not what she sought. At night she reached home disappointed, though determined to seek another temple, a larger one still, farther away,

of which she had heard on her journey. She went to this, too, to be disappointed. Though some of the idols were different from those she had seen before, yet after offering food, incense and prayer she left, feeling that none of them had the spirit of the god she longed to find.

In this way she went to temple after temple until all within many miles of her home had been visited, yet nowhere did she find the life-giving god. In her talks with the priests she asked what each god did, and always asked if there were any who could give life to the dead. Some gave one and some another answer, but all said that none of the gods whom they knew could restore the dead to life, nor did they believe there were such gods in China or in any other land. One priest said, "There is no such thing as a dead person coming to life again. Once dead, the body is dead for ever. There is no god who can, or at least who will, bring it back to life."

"There must be such a god," she replied, "for I was killed, or so nearly killed that I must have died had not some god unknown to me brought my life back. There is such a god, and I am trying to find him. I want to know where his temple is, that I may go there to worship him. He gave life back to me, and when I find him he shall have me and all that I have."

Some priests looked at her, then at each other, with a look that seemed to say, "The woman is

crazy;" others told her that her search would be vain.

Not only did she go to the temples of both of the great religions of China—the Buddhist and the Tauist—but tried to learn their doctrines and all about the many gods of which they taught. Everywhere she met with the same disappointment. The hungering, thirsting famine of soul, the anxious longing to find the god who gave life, remained, but of the god she could learn nothing. Wearied with her search, she gradually came to believe that there was no such god, or, if there were, that he had hid himself so that none could find him.

An aged priest told her one day, "I am an old man and more learned than you; I have studied this long and carefully, and ought to know. I tell you there is no better god than those we worship. Our country is the oldest, wisest and best of the world, and certainly has the best gods. If there were better ones, the wise men who lived long ago would have found out about them. But no learned men, no books, nothing in the Middle Kingdom" (the Chinese name for their country), "tells of other gods."

"Is all known?" asked Mrs. Lee; "is there nothing new to learn?"

"There is nothing new to learn about the gods," was the reply.

"But there are new things in the world—new things to us, too," answered Mrs. Lee. "At every

rise of the sun comes a new day. New years follow the old ones; new lives begin, and old die out and are gone. Why may it not be that new gods are born, or at least appear?"

"None have appeared," was the reply.

"Perhaps we know none who have appeared, yet they may have shown themselves elsewhere."

"If any gods better than those of the Middle Kingdom live, they would surely show themselves to our country. Gods, like men, seek the best lands as their home. No, rest assured that the best gods are those who have made our country their choice. Other nations try to get our gods. For many years there has been a class of foreigners in our country who have pretended to bring in a new religion, but they are merely copying* one of ours, the Buddhist. But the copy is too poor; the gods are not deceived by it. These foreigners intend to teach our people this new religion, and hope by that means to win the favor of the gods, but they have another object: they wish to get money."

"Perhaps foreigners have better gods at home," suggested Mrs. Lee.

"I don't think so," replied the old man. "If they had they would have brought some of their idols here for us to buy, or at least would have told

* There is a strong resemblance between the worship of the Roman Catholics in China and that of the Buddhists. An observer hardly knows which is copying, if either be taken from the other, the similarity is so striking.

us about them. They have better ships, better money, better cloth, better tools, better medicine; they have better guns, too, than we. All these they bring to sell to our people, but they never bring any of their gods nor their religion to sell. They would surely do it if they had better than we. Indeed, they would bring their religion to sell if they had any."

"What! have foreigners no gods at all?" asked Mrs. Lee in astonishment.

"They have none," replied the priest, "except that of which I tell you, and that is but a poor copy of our own."

"Do they never worship, have they no temples, no gods at all, in foreign countries?" inquired Mrs. Lee. "Then they are wretched indeed."

"I have not asked them, but others of our people who have lived on their ships say that they never worship any idol or spirit."

"Perhaps the men who come to our country are the poor outcast ones of their country, who have been driven away because they would not worship the gods or spirits."

"That may be," replied the old priest thoughtfully: then, after a moment of silence, he continued, "No, that cannot be, for some men who have come here were their mandarins and commanded their large war-vessels. These did not worship either."

"Strange people they must be," spoke Mrs. Lee, half to herself, "to have nothing to worship! They

must be like dogs or buffaloes. How much better the Middle Kingdom is than those wretched foreign countries! But how can it be that they have no gods? Who cares for them? Do they not serve any being nor love anything?"

"Yes," replied the priest, with a change in his look and tone; "they do serve something, and love it more than any in our land do our gods. Foreigners have a god; they love him, too, with all their hearts, and give all they have to his service. It is for this god they leave their country and come here."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Lee, not understanding the priest's words. "You said they have no gods, and now you tell me that they have one whom they love and faithfully serve."

"Oh," answered the old man, "the god of whom I speak is known and worshiped in China too. The people know and worship him, while the mandarins serve him faithfully."

"Is it the emperor?" inquired she.

"No," was the reply. "I will show you one of their gods;" and he showed her a silver dollar. "This is the god of the foreigners; for this they live—for this they make war, enslave and murder nations."

"What do you mean?" asked Mrs. Lee, looking at the priest with astonishment.

"I mean that some years ago, when our emperor forbade the smoking and buying of opium, and or-

dered that none should be brought into the country, then foreigners made war on us. They had better guns, soldiers and ships than ours, and forced the emperor to allow the opium to be sold—forced our country to buy that which makes slaves of a people and destroys a nation. Foreigners did it, but not because they love opium—they do not use it themselves—but did it because they love silver. For silver they would ruin any people."

This, it must be remembered, was in the early days of Protestant missions in China, when very little had yet been heard about the true God. Though Roman Catholics had been for many years in the country, it is possible that many who had heard of their doctrines thought, as did the priest, that they were merely poor copies of Buddhism and schemes for getting money from the people.

At length Mrs. Lee gave up her search, but not her longing, to find the god who gives life. One day she told her mother-in-law of the vain search.

"Are not the gods of the village good enough?" asked the old lady. "They are for me; they were for your husband, for his father and for his ancestors before him. Why should they not be good enough for you?"

"But these gods do not give life," answered Mrs. Lee. "I want to find the one who gave back the life to me that our cruel relatives took away. I want to make an offering to him and to serve him. Oh, where is such a god to be found?"

"There is none," was the reply. "You were not dead. If one dies there is is no coming back again to life. You were almost dead, but our gods saved you that you might take care of your children. Don't anger them now by seeking some other god, but give them your thanks. We have nothing else to give," she added in a lower tone. "Do not show such ingratitude as to forsake them for some unknown god, who neither has done you a kindness nor knows about you."

The children at first knew little about Mrs. Lee's search. She told Choh Lin one day that she had been looking for the god who had brought her back to life again.

"I can tell you where that god is," said he; "it is my god. You gave me to him and taught me to serve him, and so he brought life back to you that you may take care of me. When we are rich again I mean to make him a great feast."

Mrs. Lee did not care to destroy Choh Lin's faith in his god, and said nothing in reply. Gradually her desire to find another god passed away. She thought that perhaps it was true that the gods of her own country had been her friends, yet not one of these was the god she wanted.

CHAPTER X.

POVERTY.

AFTER recovering from her wound, Mrs. Lee learned how poor she was. Besides herself, she had her two boys, her daughter and mother-in-law to support, and neither money nor property with which to do it. The mother-in-law was too old and the boys were too young to do much, and it was contrary to Chinese custom for girls of the age of her daughter to do any work except such as could be done at home. Mrs. Lee had only her own strength on which to depend. She was able to work, but there are always in China more willing and able to work than there is work for them to do. Whatever faults the Chinese have, laziness is not one of them. Most of the people are anxious to earn a living if a chance is given. Work is scarce and wages are low. An ordinary day-laborer thinks he receives good pay if he can get one hundred cash (or less than ten cents) a day. It is true, the common kinds of food are cheap, but a family of five must live very poorly to be supported on the wages of one laboring-man. The wages of a woman are even less.

During Mrs. Lee's illness debts for food had been incurred; these must be paid. So, when able to work, she found herself with debts, but no money and almost without food. The poor woman had no time to mourn over her misfortune, nor could she give the time she wished to the search for the life-giving god. When there was work she could not leave it even for this object, and when there was nothing to do she seldom felt willing to go to the distant temples, because obliged to take a present for the god whose temple she visited: she was too poor to give more than the commonest present.

It was not unusual for Mrs. Lee to be several days at a time without work, and more than once the last cash was spent and the last bit of food eaten. At such times she would go away from the house, and where none noticed her would sit down to weep. Sometimes, if a little food were left, she would go away before meal-time, pretending that some business called, and stay away in the hope that the rest would eat before she returned. If they waited, she told them on her return that she had eaten enough, and they must take what food there was at home. Little Choh Liu at such times coaxed his mother to take some food, refusing to eat until she did. His coaxing would make her pretend to eat, though she seldom took more than a little morsel.

Not often nor long at a time during the first year of her poverty did Mrs. Lee's family lack food.

Unable to buy a large quantity at a time, she must pay a much larger price and buy the cheapest kinds of food. Choh Lin hardly knew how meat tasted, and seldom ate fish, though fish are usually so plentiful and cheap along the coasts and rivers of China. Only now and then could the family have a dish of rice, and when they had it Choh Lin said it was "Om, om," that is, "Water-rice, water-rice,"—meaning that the rice was so much mixed with water as to seem mostly water.

While rice is eaten by all the Chinese who can afford it, there are many kinds of food much cheaper, and the poor people must eat many a meal without tasting rice. When they do have it, it is often cooked until it becomes what they call "om,"—that is, rice very soft and almost dissolved in water, like a thin starch. The poorer the people the more water is mixed with their rice. Sweet potatoes form one of the most plentiful foods of Southern China. These are watery and stringy, or woody. In China, or at least in the southern part, they do not usually plant white potatoes, though a few small ones are raised for the use of foreigners. Beans, leeks, and a vegetable very much like our radish, though without sharpness, are cultivated and eaten by the poorer people, while melon-seeds and seeds of other vegetables, together with almost anything eatable, help to keep them from starvation. Nothing is wasted in China. The parts of fish and animals that even the poorest in our country would

throw away are carefully saved and eaten by the poor. The old pictures of Chinese selling rats and puppies for food may never be a reality in that country, yet the writer knows, from what he has seen, that rats and other animals not more desirable are eaten by some of the people. In times of famine, and even when famine does not distress them, the poor gather potato-leaves and weeds, which they cook and eat.

The country near the coast is overcrowded with people, and, though the land is fertile and the Chinese are good farmers, and though, as there is no winter and scarcely any frost, the land in the southern part produces two and sometimes as many as four crops a year, yet there is scarcely ever a time when some people are not starving there.

Choh Lin learned what it is to live on poor food. If the two boys were unable to earn much by work, they helped their mother in other ways. A hungry boy will do a great deal to get something to eat, and a boy who loves his friends will do more to keep them from suffering. These two little fellows were hungry, and they loved their mother, sister and grandmother; they willingly did what they could to provide for the wants of the family.

As Mrs. Lee was too poor to buy fuel, the boys were compelled to hunt wood. They could not pick up sticks along the roadside, since there are no roads in Southern China, only paths; nor could they gather up broken and useless pieces of fence, as

there are no fences; nor yet could they go to the woods and gather dead limbs or parts of fallen trees, for there are not many woods, and single trees are scarce; even fruit trees are not plenty. These and the great banians scattered here and there over the country are not allowed to be cut for fire-wood. Fortunately, the people need little fuel except for cooking, as they keep warm by putting on more clothes rather than by making fires in the chilly weather of winter. The boys did, however, have two ways to get fuel. They lived near a bay of the ocean, and sometimes wood drifted ashore. For this they, with other children, eagerly watched. The smallest sticks were picked up, and he who could find a large one thought himself fortunate. As many other children went to the shore for the same purpose, Choh Lin and his brother very often found not a bit of wood. Each one tried to be at the water in the morning long before sunrise, and even before daylight, because the first there of course had the best chance for wood. Often the two brothers were roused from a sound sleep long before daylight to go down to the shore for fuel. They begged hard to be allowed to sleep a little longer, saying that the other children did not get up so early, and promising to go soon if they might take a little nap. The grandmother, who usually called them, would not listen to these appeals, but forced the little fellows to go at once, lest others should be at the shore first. Once or twice they

were permitted to lie still for a while, but as they came back each time without a particle of fuel, the old lady learned that if they were to have anything with which to cook their food the boys could take no morning nap.

The other way of getting fuel was to take bags and a heavy hoe and go along the paths, and wherever they dared to dig up grass by the roots, and, shaking off the earth, to lay it out to dry. When ready to return they gathered up the partly-dried grass, put it into their bags and carried it home. Here it was laid out again in the sun, and when thoroughly dried was stored away for fuel.

Choh Lin and Chi Lap were also obliged to hunt for food. Any remnant of fish or meat that had been thrown away by others, if at all fit to eat, was carried home and cooked. At low tide they gathered small shellfish, shrimps and whatever else might be eaten. On the rocks in the water were tiny oysters. With a little cup and a pointed piece of iron the two boys would go at low tide along the rocks hunting for oysters. Most of the other children of Tay Soa went too, so that Choh Lin and his brother did not bring home much. They were thankful to bring home anything.

In China small boys learn that it is not the best thing in the world to be *small*. If the brothers found a good place, larger boys would drive them away and get the oysters themselves; sometimes they would even take what they had gotten by hard

work. Many a struggle did the brothers have in their efforts to get food, and it not unfrequently happened that, coming home with empty oyster-cups, they found nothing at all to eat. They bore the privation as well as possible, seldom finding fault, for they saw that the others were hungry too.

One day, as the boys were coming home from a vain search for both wood and oysters, Choh Lin asked, "Why is it, Chi Lap, that you and I, who once had plenty, must now be hungry so often?"

"I don't know," answered Chi Lap, "but I know that it is very hard to be hungry half of the time."

"Do you know that I think it is because the gods have forgotten us," said Choh Lin. "They used to give us all we wanted."

"If they have forgotten us," replied the older brother, "they are not good gods. Gods who take care of people when they are rich and forget them as soon as they are poor are little better than beggars. What is the use of worshiping them if they do us no good?"

"They do do us good," spoke Choh Lin, "but we have not worshiped in the temples as we used to do; and it may be that the gods have forgotten us because they don't see us any more."

"Then they have no business to be gods," answered Chi Lap, half angrily. "We remember our friends, though we don't see them for a long time; and a god who cannot do as much as we is not worth having."

"You must not talk so, Chi Lap," said the younger brother earnestly. "Grandmother says it is wrong, and that we are already suffering because we don't worship in the temples."

"Oh, grandmother is old and she forgets. If the gods treat us in this way after all our worship and feasts and presents, then they are gods who will get nothing from me."

"Grandmother and mother think that they are good, or why does mother go to one temple after another to worship them?"

"Shall I tell you why, Choh Lin? No one has told me, but I know it. Mother is not satisfied with the gods since we became so poor, and she is looking for a better one: she calls it a life-giving god, but people say there is no such god. I think that she will soon stop going to the temples; she don't go nearly as often as she used to."

"That is because she is too busy, and also too tired when work is done. I am tired too when we have done hunting wood and oysters."

"So am I tired; and, more than that, I don't want to go to the temple, nor do I mean to go any more, unless the gods treat us better. They took the good things we gave them when we had plenty, and now, when we have nothing, they let us suffer. Father did not think very much of them before he died. He only gave them things because mother and grandmother said he must, and because he was afraid the gods might hurt him if he did not. That

is the way many other men feel, I know; I have heard them talk. If other men need not worship, I don't mean to."

Chi Lap had learned, as many other boys are learning from the men in China, to care very little for idol-worship, while Choh Lin had not yet gone beyond the teachings of his mother and grandmother. Women are the idolaters and teachers of idolatry in China, while men, as a rule, only worship the idols when they hope to gain something by the practice.

Choh Lin did not give up the idea that the gods had forgotten him. The more he thought of what Chi Lap had said, the more difficult it was to understand why the gods should forget him. It seemed to him unkind in them to desert him when he most needed their help. "Mother," said he one day, "did not you teach me that I belong to the god whose name I wear?"

"Yes," was the answer.

"Didn't you say that the god would take care of me if I served him faithfully?"

"Yes," replied the mother, more hesitatingly, "and probably he will, after a while. He may be trying you now. But remember that you have not cared for your god of late; you hardly ever go to the temple, and it would not be strange if the god should neglect you, since you neglect him."

"Don't he know that I am poor, and must hunt oysters and pick up wood, and have not time to

worship? If I am caring for you and grandmother, that saves his doing it."

"That is true," replied Mrs. Lee, "and—and—But I think you should not forget to worship in the temple."

"If I am busy, and doing right too, why should my own god forget me? Will he not continue to take care of me unless I keep giving him presents?"

"Certainly he will," replied the grandmother, who saw that Mrs. Lee hesitated.

"Why, then, is it," asked the little boy, "that as soon as I stop worshiping and giving presents he stops showing me favors?"

"He has not stopped," replied the old lady. "You are alive and well now; you have a home and friends and something to eat. Some day, if you are faithful to him, no doubt your god will give you great favors again. He has only let you lose a few things, and still gives you many."

"Why did he let me lose anything?" asked the child. "I was careful to serve him; why should he not take better care of me? Many boys in Tay Soa, who never go to the temple unless on feast-days, have far more than we have. It seems to me that we don't get much good from serving the gods."

"Oh, Choh Lin, you must not speak so; it is very wrong," replied the grandmother. "I am afraid that the gods will punish you for such words."

"If they punish him for speaking so," spoke Chi Lap, who had quietly listened, "they will only do what they have done to him for his doing right."

"My son, you are speaking very badly," said Mrs. Lee. "We must not serve the gods for what we can get; we must do it for what they have done for us."

"That is what I think, mother," replied the older brother. "They have let us lose our property, so that we have nothing to serve them with; and the way for us to do is to let the gods take care of themselves."

The two women saw that it was useless to argue with Chi Lap. Their only hope was to keep Choh Lin from becoming as indifferent to the gods as his older brother was.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FAMINE.

DROUGHTS and famines are not rare in Southern China. The rainy season usually ends in May or June. After that, until autumn, and sometimes until February, rain seldom falls. But if storms come they are frequently fearful in violence, as well as in the amount of rain that falls in a few hours. It is during this season of the year that the typhoons, as they are called in China (hurricanes), come. These storms may last only a few hours, rarely more than a day, yet during one of them as much as six inches of rain has been known to fall. The typhoons do not come regularly; occasionally several years go by without one, and again there will be several in a year.

If the rainy season passes without much rain falling or lasts much less than three months, famine may follow. Since the country is so full of people, the failure of a single crop produces want, and when the two, three, and even four, crops of a year fail, there is certain to be great suffering. Provisions are not stored up in China by large dealers as in America, nor does China buy much food from

foreign countries. Of late years, however, since Choh Lin became a man, foreign merchants in times of scarcity buy great quantities of food elsewhere and sell it to the people. Thus foreigners have prevented much suffering, and yet have made themselves rich.

The rice-fields of China are level spots of ground surrounded by a small embankment a few inches high and wide. The fields vary in size, from a small part of an acre to several acres. These fields are always near a stream, spring or well, from which is taken the water to flood them when the crop is growing. Usually, a number of rice-fields are together, and the one nearest the water is flooded first; when that is full the water is allowed to flow into the next, and so on until all are covered. Sometimes a little canal is made between the fields, and this being kept full of water and openings made in the banks of the fields along which it passes, the water runs in, and thus keeps each one full. The ground is usually ploughed and harrowed or raked when very wet or even partly under water, and the young rice-plants are set in the ground when it is flooded. A newly-planted rice-field is a pretty sight, with the tiny spears of green rising in regular rows from the sheet of quiet water. Nor does the beauty grow less when the tall rice, swaying with the wind, seems like green waves rising and falling in an almost hidden sea of silver. Many fields are made by terracing the hillsides, the smallest being

the highest, so that they appear like great green steps on the hills, growing smaller and smaller as they ascend. Of course there are none of these on hillsides that have not a spring above them. Usually, there are rice-fields on the banks of the rivers, from which the water to flood them is taken. This is pumped up by a sort of endless-chain pump worked by men's feet.

When Choh Lin was seven years old there did not fall as much rain as usual in the spring, and with the early summer came a drought. The first crop of rice planted in April grew well for a few weeks, and then the water began to fail. The fields farthest away from spring and brook were shut off from the supply. Field after field was in this way deprived of water and the growing rice left to die. While near the failing water the fields remained green, farther away they grew yellow, ripening straw, but no rice. Soon there were great barren patches from which the half-grown rice had been gathered by the disappointed farmers. Daily the people watched the sky, hoping for some sign of rain. Clouds now and then appeared and raised their drooping spirits, but passed away. The farmers went to the temples and prayed for rain. With empty hands, but full hearts, they gathered in the temples and begged the idols not to let them and their children starve. They gave their meagre offerings, hoping to buy what the gods were unwilling to give; but all in vain. Day after day the sun

poured his rays upon the parched earth until the dreary summer wore away.

A few sheaves of ripened rice had been gathered here and there near the springs and streams, while the other fields had produced nothing but empty straw. The farmers had watched the growth of the other crops, hoping that these would live until rain came; but they saw the leaves of the sweet potatoes curl up and the beans die, and thus crop after crop failed. The people dug up the small potatoes and ate them. The poor gathered the withered potato-vines and cooked them to stay the cravings of hunger. When the time for planting the second crop of rice came in June or July, there was no water for flooding the fields. The whole country was parched.

Around the failing springs and wells the thirsty ones gathered. Well after well sent back empty the bucket dipped to its lowest depth; one spring after another dried up; the brooks failed, and only in the large streams was water to be found. At night the poor people gathered around the few deep wells containing a little water. Each waited his turn, and some remained until morning before they could get a portion, as the water would soon be exhausted, and they must wait for a fresh supply to run in. Even this resource soon almost entirely failed. The owners of the wells, finding them empty in the morning, shut and locked them. At times the locks were broken and the scant supply

of water taken. Sometimes the stillness of the night was broken by the angry words of men fighting for water.

Many poor families suffered, and so did Mrs. Lee's. She could earn no money. Even had she had money, food was so scarce that it would have taken a small fortune to support a family in China. Begging around Tay Soa was useless, for most of the people were little better than beggars. Day after day Chi Lap and Choh Lin, with their little baskets, wandered wearily over the country, hunting for weeds or something that might do for food. They watched the tides on the shore, and gathered all the oysters they could, as well as other shellfish. In this way the two boys did much to keep their family from starving.

This struggle for life was a long and hard one, and it often seemed that more than one of the family must die before it ended. Chi Lap, older and stronger, was better able to endure hunger; Choh Lin grew thin and seemed wasting away.

One day their mother and grandmother were talking of their suffering, when Mrs. Lee said, "If there were only four instead of five mouths to feed we might live, but if we continue in this way I fear that little Choh Lin, the weakest, will die. There seems only one way to save his life: we must give him away to some rich man. He is such a nice loving boy that many will be glad to have him."

Chi Lap overheard his mother, and cried, "Oh,

mother, do not give Choh Lin away. He is only a little boy; it doesn't take much to feed him. We must keep him. He is the little one; if he is gone we shall all be lonely and our hearts will die. We cannot let him go; if we must starve, let us all starve together. But better times will come."

Again and again did Mrs. Lee talk of giving her little boy away, and as often was she persuaded by her older son to keep the little one.

Choh Lin became too weak to accompany his older brother in the searches for food. One day his mother took the little fellow to the temple to pray for rain and for food. Kneeling before the idol, the child lifted up his skeleton hands and pleaded that the god would not forget and leave them to starve. When they were slowly walking back the child asked, "Mother, do you think the gods will let us starve?"

"I don't know," was her reply. "I hope not, yet others are starving and dying around us. If the famine keep on much longer, I fear we must all die."

"If we only had some money to make offerings to my god and give him a feast, I am sure he would keep us from starving. I believe he loves me and wants to take care of me, but it may cost so much that the gods cannot do it for nothing."

Mrs. Lee gave her little son a look of surprise, but said nothing, though his remark made her think, and she asked herself, "Can it be true that the gods

care only for the rich and not for the poor? Is there no god who cares for people without expecting something for it? We are taught that the gods care for those who make them presents; even the god of the beggars is their friend because they offer him part of what they get."

One day Chi Lap came in with a quick step, and in a cheerful voice said, "Oh, mother, the famine will soon end now. The great mandarins have ordered a procession to the temples to pray for rain. All the mandarins and nobles are to go there and ask the gods to bring the famine to an end. A proclamation has been made forbidding the people to take life, to kill any animals. The mandarins say that the gods are angry at the people for shedding blood, and therefore withhold the rain."

"Have we shed any blood?" asked Choh Lin.

"No, child," answered his grandmother; "we are too poor, and have nothing, no goat nor even a chicken, whose blood we might shed."

"Well, I am glad the gods are not angry at us, then," said the little fellow.

"Yet they make us suffer as much as those who have shed blood," replied Chi Lap.

"We are all alive," spoke the grandmother, "while others have died. How do you know but that the gods are taking care of us, while they cannot help our suffering from the famine that they must send upon others?"

"Well, I know what I'd do if I had my way,"

said Chi Lap. "The gods make people suffer: I'd make the gods suffer. I would just throw their idols out of doors. If they will not do anything without pay, and then punish a lot of people for what one does, they ought to be punished themselves. How can people help shedding blood sometimes? They must live and eat meat too."

"Chi Lap! Chi Lap!" spoke the grandmother, "be still with your wickedness. The gods will punish, and maybe kill us all, for what you say."

"Grandmother, I am only saying what I have heard men say," replied the boy. "If I am so wicked, they must be, yet the gods do not punish them."

"Perhaps the gods have sent this very drought because of their wickedness," replied the grandmother. "When I was a child we never heard such things said of the gods. Then every one spoke of them in reverence, and men worshiped as well as women. Now people speak ill of the gods. Some great calamity will surely come to our nation for this."

Although the procession was made in the city, the drought and famine continued for months, nor did they stop until the rainy season of the following spring.

CHAPTER XII.

THE DOGS.

THE boys had kept their dogs after the property was taken. From being plump and fat, the creatures became lean as the dogs of the street. The boys tried to save some of their own food to give their pets, but Mrs. Lee forbade this, and threatened to have the animals killed if Chi Lap and Choh Lin gave them food.

Some of the neighbors, who knew that the boys did not have enough to eat, asked, "Why do not you kill and eat your dogs? Kill them, cook them. Dog-meat is better than beggar's meat" (hunger).

"We will not kill our dogs," answered Chi Lap; "they are too good. If they did not forsake us when we needed them, we will not forsake them when they need us."

When Choh Lin understood what was meant he ran to his own dog, and, throwing his arms aronnd his neck, said, "No, Kailo, we will not kill you. I will keep you until I am a man; then I will feed you enough to make you fat again."

Each morning, when the boys started on their errands after fuel or food before the drought began,

the dogs accompanied them. No matter how early the little fellows started, the dogs were at the door to welcome and go with them to the shore or field. Until the famine began the animals managed to find food enough to keep from actual starvation, but with the scarcity the poor creatures grew thin as skeletons and were unable to run as once they did. If the dogs or the boys were fortunate enough to find anything that could be eaten, the poor brutes devoured it as though afraid the little would grow less for every second it remained uneaten. Whatever the boys found fit to eat, and that they could possibly do without, they gave to the dogs. Often much of the time spent in hunting for wood was really spent in searching for something with which to feed the starving brutes.

The dogs seemed to understand the feeling of their young masters and gratefully took the little food given. Had they been like the street-dogs of China, they would not only have stolen something to eat wherever they could find it, but might have attacked each other or have tried to kill and eat their young masters. Naturally gentle, affectionate and obedient, starvation did not change the nature of the faithful brutes. Sometimes Choh Lin, sitting down in the sand on the shore, would take his dog between his knees, and, looking into his eyes, would try to encourage him with a hope of better times: "Poor Kailo! you won't be thin and hungry then, will you? No, old dog, you'll have

enough then; and it won't be bits and bones, either, but you'll have rice and fish and meat—good meat, too. Won't that be good, old dog?"

The affectionate creature looked into the face of his master as if he understood all and only lacked words to answer. Tenderly he would lick the bare arm resting on his neck or rest his head against the boy's knee, while he looked wistfully into the thin face before him.

One morning the boys missed their dogs; not daring to call loudly, lest other boys should hear and hurry to get first to the shore, the brothers hastened to the water, expecting to find their dogs waiting for them on their return. But no dogs appeared as they came home, nor had any of the family seen them. Calling did not bring them; so the boys started on a search for the animals. After looking a long time and calling often, they heard the low bark or cry of a dog. Running to the place whence the sound came, they found Chi Lap's dog lying stretched out and dead, while the faithful Kailo lay beside him. The poor fellow wagged his tail feebly, as if to welcome his young master, and then in a low moan seemed to try to tell that his friend was dead. Sorrowfully the boys kneeled beside the dead brute and mourned as though he were a brother. Looking up through his tears, Choh Lin said, "We have but one dog now, Chi Lap; he is only half mine, the other half is yours. Kailo is *our* dog now. We will take care of him—won't we, Chi

Lap?" And then, taking Kailo's head between his hands, the little fellow said, "You must not die; we cannot do without you, Kailo."

When the first burst of sorrow was over the boys talked about what had caused the death of the dog, not thinking that he had died from hunger.

"He always was a good dog," said Chi Lap, "and when his soul is born again into another body, it will not be as a dog. I think he will be even better than a girl. He'll be a boy like you and me, Choh Lin."

"Do you think we will know him, Chi Lap?" asked the younger brother.

"I do not know," replied the other; "perhaps he will know us. A baby-boy may be born whom we like very much, and in it will be the soul of my dog."

"Where has his soul gone now, Chi Lap?"

"I don't know. Perhaps it has gone up in the air, where the clouds are."

"What are souls?"

"Souls are—they are—" and Chi Lap hesitated. "Souls are the clouds from which all the rain has fallen. The body is the rain, and the soul is the cloud when the rain has gone out of it."

Choh Lin asked no more questions. Probably he knew as much as he did before he asked his brother. There are other people besides Chinese boys who cannot describe the soul.

After talking till they, for the time, forgot their sorrow, Chi Lap said, as he pointed to the dead dog, "But we must bury him, or some people who are as hungry as we will find San and eat him. There is not much of him left except bone and skin, but he was too good to be eaten."

"Where shall we bury him?" asked Choh Lin. "Shall we carry him to some hill where they bury people?"

"No," replied the other, "he is too heavy to carry; we will bury him right here. He came here to die; maybe he chose this place because he thought it a lucky spot. No one will find his body here. You stay here and watch until I can go for a hoe with which to dig his grave."

"No," replied the little fellow, "I do not want to stay here alone; the black-faced man may get me if I am here." (When the Chinese wish to frighten their children they tell them that the black-faced man will get them.) "Let me go home with you. Kailo will stay here and watch by San—won't you, Kailo?" The feeble wag of the dog's tail and a weak effort to lick his young master's hand were the dog's answer. But he was too weak to get on his feet to follow the boys.

Choh Lin would neither stay nor go alone, so the two boys started to get a hoe with which to dig the grave, leaving Kailo to watch by his dead companion. On their way the boys resolved to say nothing about the death of San.

"Must not we tell mother or grandmother?" asked Choh Lin.

"No," replied the older brother; "if they don't know they can't tell. People will ask where my dog is, and if they find out they will dig him up. Don't tell anybody where San is."

"I won't," replied the little fellow, pressing his lips together—"not even if they whip me for it."

When they reached home Chi Lap was sent off on an errand at once. It kept him away for some time. Choh Lin waited impatiently for his return, and was ready with a hoe as soon as Chi Lap came back.

"Where are you going with that hoe?" asked the grandmother as she saw the two boys starting off. "Bring it back and give it to me, and you boys go down to the water; the tide will soon be low enough, so that you may find shrimps or crabs."

Not daring to tell their object, the boys reluctantly obeyed, and, taking their basket, went down to the shore.

"Kailo will take care of San," said Choh Lin hopefully, "and we'll come back as soon as we can, and then go to bury the good dog."

"Where will we get a hoe?" asked Chi Lap. "If grandmother were not so harsh I would have told her about San."

"No matter, Chi Lap," said the other, taking his older brother by the hand as they walked along; "we can borrow a hoe somewhere, I know."

"Yes, but mother and grandmother won't let us go unless we tell them. Perhaps they won't let us go even then."

"I will tell you what we can do: we won't go home from the shore, but go around and borrow a hoe from somebody at the other end of the village, and then we can bury San."

"I am afraid no one will let us have a hoe."

"Let me tell you what we can do, Chi Lap. Let us tell Jip; he won't let any one know. He is our friend, and he liked San too; he will get his father's hoe and help us."

"That's so; we can do that." And more cheerfully the two boys went down to the water. They met Jip there, and told him the story of San's death, and asked if he would help bury the dog.

"Poor old San!" said Jip; "he was such a good dog! I am sorry he is dead. Yes, I can get a hoe, and will help you bury him."

As soon as they could the three boys left the water and started on their sad errand. As they were going Jip asked, "Haven't you any paper-money and other paper to put on San's grave?"

"No, we didn't think about that," answered Chi Lap. "Do you think we ought to put paper there? A dog's spirit won't know how to use it in the other world?"

"We don't know how much a dog's spirit knows when it gets out of the body," replied Jip. "I would put paper on the grave."

"We haven't any," answered Choh Lin.

"And that isn't the worst of it: we have no cash to buy it," said Chi Lap.

"I have some cash at home," replied Jip; "we'll take that."

"We can't pay you back, Jip," said Chi Lap; "at least not till we are richer than we are now."

"That makes no difference," answered Jip; "let San be my dog too."

The paper was bought; Jip got the hoe, and the three boys started for the grave.

This paper, that is made to imitate money, clothing and other things, is put on the grave of the dead in the expectation that when it disappears from the grave it will be found in the spirit-world, and there be real money and clothing and other necessary things for the use of the spirit on whose grave it was first placed.

When the boys came in sight of the dogs they saw Kailo stretched out beside his dead companion. He took no notice of their approach, though Choh Lin called him by name. "See, Kailo is asleep," said the little fellow to the others. Kailo was asleep, but it was the same slumber that had come to San before. Lying side by side, the two dogs were dead. It was a sad discovery for Choh Lin. Sitting down beside the body of the brute, he stroked the head, wetting it with his tears as he mourned over his dead friend. The two bereaved young masters sat each beside his own, and Jip

stood near by, looking on in sad silence. There were tears in his eyes too.

After waiting a while he walked a little way from the boys and began digging. Chi Lap soon followed him and helped at the work, the two meanwhile talking of the good qualities of the dogs. When a place deep and broad enough to contain the bodies of the dogs had been dug they came to Choh Lin, who still sat stroking the head of his dog, though silently now, and Chi Lap said, "Now, Choh Lin, the grave is ready; shall we bury San first? he died first."

Without replying the little fellow arose, and Jip, who acted as undertaker, tried to fold San's fore feet over his breast. The boy had thoughtfully brought with him two long pieces of cotton cloth; these he put around the body as the Chinese place ropes about a coffin, toward the head and toward the feet. Then, placing the hoe-handle through the pieces of cloth, whose ends were tied together, he motioned to Chi Lap to put one end of the handle on his shoulder, and, Jip taking the other, the two carried the dog to the grave, and then, removing the bands of cloth, came back for Choh Lin's dog. When this had been prepared in the same way Choh Lin said, "Let me help carry Kailo."

The two dogs were laid side by side in the ground. "Shall we have the ceremonies?" asked Jip, looking at the other boys.

"I think we ought to bow once," said Chi Lap.

"I mean to worship just as if it were my brother," spoke Choh Lin.

Stepping back from the grave, first Chi Lap and afterward Choh Lin, approached and bowed each three times; Jip, out of sympathy for his friends, imitated them, and then said, "Now shall I cover them?"

The dogs were soon covered, the paper scattered over the grave, and then the boys slowly started homeward.

CHAPTER XIII.

BOYS' TROUBLES.

CHOH LIN did not soon forget the death of his dog. Indeed, twenty years after, when a Christian preacher, he told the author with no little sorrow the story of the famine and the burial of the dogs.

It was a joyful time in Tay Soa when the first rain fell after the famine. When the cry, "Haw lai!" (Rain comes), was shouted in the streets every one rushed out to see the welcome sight. The wasted faces turned upward to catch the first drops, while the despairing look that had been on nearly every face gave place to smiles of gladness. The rain began in earnest, and the people saw that there was a prospect of a great rainfall.

One shower followed another in rapid succession, hardly giving the farmers time to plough or plant between them. But rain was so welcome that none seemed to fear it. Not stopping to think of the wetting they would get, the men began to work as soon as the ground was moist enough. They seemed to forget, too, their weakness and hunger in the prospect of soon having an abundance of food.

While the men went to the fields the women went to the temples to offer their thanks to the gods. Choh Lin and his brother took their share in the general rejoicing. Though almost starving for lack of food, yet with plenty of water they seemed to feel stronger.

"Oh, mother," said Choh Lin a few days after the first rain, "the grass is coming out; we will soon be able to pick green leaves and blades of grass, and not be obliged to cook dried ones any more. My god has at last heard our prayers, and now we will have enough to eat again."

"He has taken a long time to think about hearing your prayers," replied Chi Lap, good-naturedly. "If he had waited a little longer he need not have done it at all. We should not have required anything to eat in this world. But he seems to have cared for others as much as for you."

"Well, he is a good god," said the smaller boy; "he does care for all."

"That may be," answered Chi Lap, "but I see that most of the people thank the other gods for rain. Would it not be well for you to tell them that they are thanking the wrong god?"

"Choh Lin is right, as are the other people," spoke the grandmother. "All the gods have joined together and answered the prayers for rain; they are good to those who serve them."

"That is, to those who lived through the famine," said Chi Lap in a lower tone. "If people, instead

of dying from starvation, would just wait, they might learn how good the gods are."

Food did soon become more plenty. That which had been hoarded was now brought out. Since there was a prospect of enough before long, each one who had more than would be needed tried to sell at the high prices. These soon came down, and not only was there more to be bought, but it could also be bought with less money. Mrs. Lee found all the work she could do, and Chi Lap, who had grown large enough to help, also earned money. The work of wood-gathering and hunting for food was given almost entirely to Choh Lin, who with more food soon became quite strong again. At first he feared to go alone, but gradually became used to it and went cheerfully to his work. He did not find it as pleasant, however, to hunt for wood as when his brother was with him. The other boys, taking advantage of his small size, gave the little fellow no small trouble.

One day, on his way home from the shore with a bundle of sticks, he sat down to rest. Near him was a peg driven in the ground to which a cow was tied to eat the grass. Hardly thinking what he did, the boy took a stick from the bundle and began tapping on the top of the peg. Soon rapid footsteps were heard behind him. In a moment the little fellow was on his feet, but not soon enough to escape one of his tormentors. A large boy who disliked Choh Lin came up and gave him a severe

kicking for trying, as he said, to break the peg. The big fellow did not own the cow, but here was an excuse for hurting the small boy without running any risk of being hurt in return.

Many a time did Choh Lin receive knocks and kicks from the larger boys. They stole his wood and took away the oysters and crabs he had gathered, and when he struggled to keep his property they pushed him down and beat and kicked him for fighting. This was not because he had so many enemies, but because in Tay Soa, as in many other places in China, there were two parties among the boys. The side to which Choh Lin belonged was not only smaller, but composed of smaller boys, so that the little fellow and his relatives were worsted in more than one fight. They did not, however, often come to blows, though now and then there was a real fight between the two sides. Boys as well as men in China are less willing to fight than people are in America. When they have battles, they prefer to fight with their tongues; this does not hurt much, and such battles can be fought at any time or place and yet the fighters not be unfitted for work afterward. These tongue-battles between the boys' parties sometimes ended in real battles. Stones were flung, sticks were used, fists and feet were brought into the fight, and sometimes there were bloody noses and bruised bodies before the belligerents separated.

The most of Choh Lin's trouble came when he

was alone. If his older brother were with him, the larger boys usually let him alone.

More than once, Choh Lin, after telling the story of his wrongs, added, "I wish I were a man; then they would not knock me around as they do now."

Chi Lap would say, "Wait until we are men; then we will pay them back."

The sister often wished herself a man to take the part of her brothers. To her words of sympathy Choh Lin replied one day, "I'm glad that you are a girl and must stay in the house. No one can harm you. I almost wish that I was a girl too; girls don't get kicked and knocked around as we do."

"I'll tell you what we can do," replied Chi Lap. "Our sister will soon be old enough to be married; then mother must marry her to a very big man, and he can give those boys one of the hardest beatings they ever had, and you and I, Choh Lin, will just look on and see it."

"There is a better way to punish your enemies," said the grandmother. "You are not strong enough to punish those boys, but others are."

"Who, grandmother?" asked the boys.

"If I tell you, Chi Lap will only mock at what I say," replied the old lady; "but I will tell Choh Lin: he knows how to respect the aged."

"I do respect the aged," replied Chi Lap. "Do not I always treat you kindly, grandmother?"

"Yes, you treat *me* well enough," replied she,

"but it is not of myself that I speak. There are beings greater far than I, whom you treat with disrespect."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Chi Lap in wonder.

"I mean the gods," was the reply. "You speak of them as though they were of no more account than slaves."

"I do not mean to mock them," answered Chi Lap. "The gods may be good enough, but I do not quite see their goodness. I only say what the men say of the gods, anyway."

"Yes, and we who serve them faithfully must suffer for what you and such men say of them. The white crow must starve in the black one's famine."

Chi Lap made no reply, and the grandmother, turning to Choh Lin, continued: "If you go to the temple and pray to the gods, they will punish your enemies. Tell your own god that he must take care of you; and if the bad boys continue to abuse you, then ask him to punish them severely; yes, tell him to kill them."

"Oh, grandmother," said he, "I don't want them to be killed. If the god would punish and make them cry twice as bad as they make me cry, that would be enough."

"How would it do," asked Mrs. Lee, who had listened, "to ask the god to make the boys your friends?"

"Do gods ever do that?" asked Chi Lap. "I

thought they punished the bad, rewarded the good and took care of their friends, and that is all. I did not know that they cared at all for bad people, except to let them go on and grow worse and worse until they could not stand it any longer; then they suddenly threw them down into the dark prison for the bad."

"That is what the gods do," replied the grandmother. "They do not make bad people good nor good people bad; that is the work of people themselves."

"I wish the gods would help people to become better," said Mrs. Lee with a sigh.

Not long after this talk Choh Lin asked his brother, "Chi Lap, will you make a kite for me? The other boys have kites; it is kiteflying-time, and I want a kite too."

"What kind do you want?" asked the older brother.

"Just the best one you can make," answered Choh Lin. "Make a big bird—one that will fly very high and pull hard at the string."

"All right!" replied Chi Lap.

This custom of flying kites is quite common in Southern China. In the city of Foo Chow (recently attacked by the French), some distance north of Tay Soa, the ninth day of the ninth month is observed as a special day for flying kites. At Tay Soa and Amoy the spring is the kiteflying-time. The kites are made in all kinds of shapes—some

like fish, others like birds, others like snakes, and, indeed, like almost anything else that the ingenious Chinese can think of imitating.

A bird-kite was made for Choh Lin, and the little fellow, with his friend Oan and two or three other boys, went out to fly it. Some of the larger boys of the other party were out flying kites, but had none as fine as that of Choh Lin. Chi Lap could do well whatever he tried, but he was more skillful in kite-making than in anything else, as this kite proved.

When the small boys appeared with the fine large kite, the larger boys tried to coax its owner to trade it off for one of theirs. Failing in that, they offered to buy it, but Choh Lin was unwilling to part with it. Determined to get the better kite in some way, yet unwilling to take it from him by force, they tried to persuade him to make his kite fly a race with one of theirs. One of them said, "Choh Lin, let us see whose kite can fly the best? If yours can, then you may take mine, but if mine flies the highest, then I will take yours."

The little fellow was unwilling to try this, but at length consented; the kites went up, and Choh Lin's went higher than any others.

"There, Tun!" cried he, "my kite is the highest. Yours can't go as high as that. But you can keep your kite; I don't want it."

"Oh yes, take it," whispered Oan; "it's yours now; then give it to us."

"Tun, Choh Lin has won your kite," said one of the little boy's friends, "so hand it over to him."

For a moment the larger boy hesitated, and then, one of his friends whispering to him, he spoke: "Right! Choh Lin's kite has won. I don't want to give up mine, but it's fair.—Here, Choh Lin, take the string; I will not pull it down. Now let me hold the string of yours for a while."

Without thinking, the little fellow took the cord of Tun's kite, handing that of his own to the larger boy. Tun took it and walked slowly away, flying the kite as if it were his own. In a few minutes Choh Lin handed the string he held to Oan and went to Tun and asked for his own kite.

"This is not yours," replied the large boy; "it is mine now."

Choh Lin's entreaties and threats were of no avail. Tun's friends sided with him, and there was no help for the smaller boys. Choh Lin was obliged to give up his own and take the poorer kite; but kiteflying had no further interest for him now. Taking hold of the string, he pulled down the kite, and, carrying it in his hand, started with his friends for home. They had not gone far, muttering and threatening what they would do to the larger boys as soon as a chance offered, when Oan, seeing some stones in their path, said, "Here's a chance now. Let us throw stones at their kites and break them."

"We can't hit them; they are too high," replied Choh Lin.

"Well, we can hit the boys, if we can't the kites," said one of the others; "let us try."

The kite was dropped, and in a moment the little fellows caught up several stones each, and, running back a short distance, began throwing at the larger boys. Fortunately, the aim was bad and not a stone struck the mark. But those who held no kite-strings did not wait to be hit: they started after the small boys, chasing them some distance. Choh Lin and his companions in their haste neglected to take up the kite, and the larger boys carried it back as their own.

After this the little fellow was careful to make no bargains and to have nothing to do with the larger boys. Perhaps it saved him from falling into the practice, common among boys as well as men in China, of betting and gambling.

One day in the autumn some of Choh Lin's friends met him and said, "There is a man down street who has a whole tubful of crickets to sell; let us buy some and have a cricket-fight."

"I haven't any cash," replied he.

"I have," answered Chiap, "and will lend you some; then you can pay me back when your mother gives you money."

"But she does not give me any money," replied he; "she is too poor yet."

While they were talking Chi Lap came along.

"Here comes your brother; he'll let you have cash," said one of the boys.

"I don't want to fight erickets," replied Choh Lin.

"Don't want to? Why, it's fun," said the other; "come along and try. You don't want to because you do not know about it. Chi Lap will—won't you, Chi Lap?" called out Chiap.

"Do what?" asked he.

"Fight crickets. There's a man down street who has a whole tubful. They are fine strong young crickets, and he sells them cheap, too. Let's have a cricket-fight.—What do you say, Chi Lap?"

"Where is the man?" asked he eagerly; and the boys hurried down the street to the cricket-seller, Choh Lin following more slowly.

Crickets were bought, placed in a box and the boys hastened away to have a cricket-fight. A basin was brought and set on the ground. Chiap and Chi Lap then sat down on opposite sides, and each put a cricket in front of him in the basin. The two boys then bet each several cash that his own cricket would be the best fighter. Some of the other boys who had followed bet, some on Chiap's and others on Chi Lap's cricket. When all were ready the two boys, each with a straw, began teasing his cricket until the two insects became angry, when, uttering loud chirrups, they sprang upon each other. Then began a battle between the little creatures that would have been terrible if they had been large. The boys crowded around the basin and jostled each other as they eagerly watched the fight, each seem-

ing nearly as much excited as the crickets. They cheered and shouted, and urged the enraged insects on in the battle. Though each little creature had a leg torn off, both kept on with the desperate combat. At length Chi Lap's cricket stopped fighting, and soon ceased struggling; he was dead.

Chiap had won Chi Lap's cash, and others who had bet on his cricket lost their money too.

"I mean to try it again, Chiap," said Chi Lap, "if you will." Another fight was soon arranged for, the money staked and the battle begun. This time Chiap's cricket lost two of its legs, and was forced to try to escape, and Chi Lap was the winner.

Since each had won a battle, the third must be fought. This Chi Lap gained. By this time the rest of the boys were ready to try a cricket-fight. They tried to persuade Choh Lin to buy a cricket, or at least bet on one, but he remembered his kite and refused. He even tried to persuade Chi Lap to stop, and threatened to tell their mother, but the elder brother had caught the excitement of gambling, and he would not stop until all the crickets had fought. After losing and winning, and in the end losing not only the price of the crickets, but some money besides, Chi Lap went home with his younger brother somewhat discouraged with gambling.

Choh Lin told their mother, who scolded her eldest son and forbade his gambling again. This, however, did not prevent him, but it did stop his

gambling when Choh Lin was by, and made the older less willing to have the company of his younger brother.

Boys very early in life learn to gamble in China; nor is it strange: they see men every day engaged in it. High and low, rich and poor, are gamblers.

CHAPTER XIV.

CHOH LIN AT SCHOOL.

WHEN Choh Lin was nine years old his mother felt able to send him to school. He was a bright boy, and every one thought that he should learn to read. When told that he was to be a school-boy, he was greatly pleased. Perhaps he thought that now his days for hunting wood and gathering crabs and oysters were over, but he was glad to go to school. He wanted to be able to read the story-books of his country, and then, too, it would be something new.

When the school began he started in the morning with the others. Without books or slate, with no dinner-basket on his arm, he entered the school-room. It was dark and gloomy, its walls were almost black with smoke; its only windows were two square holes with wooden bars across, high above the reach of the scholars. There were a few desks or tables and some wooden benches without backs in the room; these, with the teacher's desk and chair, were the only furniture.

The school was soon called to order by the teacher, who tried to put on a very wise look behind his

large speetacles. Choh Lin as he looked at him felt that he was in the presenee of the wisest man in China, and one who probably knew all there was to be learned. He wondered if he ever would know one-half as mueh as the sober schoolmaster, and determined to try to take in all the learning his head would hold. When the scholars were all seated the teacher called one to him, and, taking a book, read a sentence or two from it, and had the boy repeat it eorreetly after him; then he sent the pupil to his seat to repeat again and again the same words. Then another was ealled, and his lesson read to him in the same way; he in turn was sent baek to his seat repeating it. In this way all were called, until each had his lesson given. All were soon in their seats studying and repeating their lessons at the top of their voices, as if each were trying to drown the voices of the others. Swinging themselves back and forth on their seats and shouting with all their might, the scholars seemed to be doing anything else than studying; yet this, the Chinese think, is the true way to study. Each by shouting out his own lesson will be unable to hear what others say, and will not be attending to that with which he has no business. Besides, the teacher can tell by the noise how mueh studying is being done.

As soon as a boy had learned the lesson he went to the teacher, and, handing him the book, turned his own baek on the master; then in a rapid way he rattled off from memory what had been learned.

A new lesson was given in the same way as the first, and the pupils went back to their seats to shout it into their memory.

Such was the school to which Choh Lin went. Like many others in China, little else was taught in it than reading some of the old books of the country and writing. Arithmetic, geography, history and other studies, so important in American schools, had little place there. If able to do as well as their forefathers did thousands of years ago, the Chinese usually are satisfied.

After the other boys had their lessons given, Choh Lin's turn came. The teacher called him up, asked a few questions, praised him, and then gave him, like the others, a sentence or two to learn, only it was easier than what the older boys had. He did not begin at the alphabet, because the Chinese language has no alphabet—no letters at all. Nor did he need to learn to spell. The people of Choh Lin's country never spell in their own language; the words are already spelled out and ready for the scholar to begin to read them. Instead of being made up of letters, the words are made up of dots and marks, straight and crooked arranged in different ways. But every child in America probably has seen Chinese characters, or words, on tea-boxes, if nowhere else. Those are real Chinese words—just like the words in their books. If some boy thinks that it must be easy to learn to read, since there are no words to be spelled, let him think that

Chinese words are hard to remember because there are so many of them. There are at least ten thousand in common use, and each one different from the others, yet many so alike that one is often mistaken for another. Imagine how hard it would be to learn to read a language that had several thousand letters, and each made up of a number of marks, some of very many. The fact is, that there probably is no written language so difficult to learn to read as the Chinese. One may be learning a lifetime and yet not know nearly all the words in the books for the use of common people.

When Choh Lin went to his seat, reciting the words the teacher had read, the little fellow felt as if he had grown six inches since he came into the schoolroom. He was a scholar in a school with other boys. He had a book of his own, and, more than that, was studying a lesson given by a real teacher—a man who wore spectacles, and large ones too. Proud Choh Lin! He saw himself there a student and becoming learned and great. The teacher had told him that by diligent study he would some day become a learned man, a graduate, and then an officer of the government, and then—But the boy's imagination could not go farther. He knew of the mandarins who ruled over the portion of country to which Tay Soa belonged; he had heard of the Tau Tai, or district magistrate, and knew that there was such a being as a governor-general of the province; but the emperor—of course

he had heard of him—whether he was a real god or part god and part man Choh Lin did not know. He certainly did not think of being emperor some day, any more than he did of being a god, nor did he know enough about a governor-general to think of being one when he was old enough; but he did think that he might some day become a *siun kang*, an under-mandarin, or a mandarin's secretary. Great plans were formed in that little head as he walked to his seat and began to study. He would be great, and then he should be rich, and thus have plenty of money. Then his mother, sister and the rest would have plenty to eat, no matter how much famine there might be, nor need they work any more.

In thinking and planning the little boy did not forget his lesson. He kept repeating it over and over in a low voice, not daring to shout out as the rest did. He was afraid of his own voice, but as he thought more of his plans and heard the voices of others ringing in his ears, he tried to study loud too, and raised his voice; but the noise made by the others drowned his own, and he spoke louder, then louder and louder, until his voice rose as high as the rest; then Choh Lin was content. He was a full scholar now, and could shout as loudly as any. He tried to shout a little louder, but it soon made him hoarse, and he was obliged to be less a scholar, though he swayed himself back and forth, just as he saw the others do, until there was danger of his falling off the bench.

Choh Lin now knew his lesson, and had known it for some time, but hardly dared go to the teacher with it. Finding enough courage at length, he gathered all he had and boldly walked to the teacher's desk; handing the book, he turned his back and began to recite. He went through the whole, though it was not much, without missing a word.

"Ah! you have done well to-day for a new scholar," said the teacher. "Some day you will know by heart many books if you keep on in this way."

The tremble he felt when he came to recite had all gone out of the little boy's knees now, and all the flutter out of his heart. He felt proud of the teacher's praise, and determined to be a scholar equal to the teacher himself. A new lesson was given to be speedily learned and well recited. Choh Lin did not understand why he was praised less for this than for the first; so he took his seat after the second recitation with less pride; but at the end of the day he had made good progress for a beginner, and was quite well pleased with being a school-boy.

As he went along the street he wondered if people did not look at him and say, "Choh Lin has become a scholar. He will be a great man some day, perhaps a graduate and a high mandarin."

He had a great deal to tell at night about the school. His mother, grandmother, brother and sister were almost as proud of the young scholar as he

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was of himself, and were ready to listen to his plans for the future until he talked of being a very great man; then Chi Lap told him that "the little bird chirruped loudly in the nest, but chirruped louder to get back when the nest was gone."

Chi Lap's remarks usually of late quieted the younger brother in his plans. The two loved each other, no doubt, as much as ever, but the older brother, being more at work and among men, thought it his duty to say wise things to the younger one.

Choh Lin went to school day after day, nor did he grow tired of study. Sometimes he did wish for a day when he might rest, but those days are few in China—no Saturday of play for the scholars, and no Sabbath of rest. Now and then a feast-day comes when the schools are closed, but usually they are open day after day. The Chinese, having no Sunday, have no weeks; their time is divided by days, or literally suns and months, or moons.

As the little boy talked more with the boys at school, his thoughts were more fixed on becoming rich than on becoming great. Since he noticed how his mother and Chi Lap must work to earn money for food and clothing for the family, he determined to be rich and pay them back some day. "Mother, you and Chi Lap work on yet a few years," said he one day, "until I have learned enough at school; then I will go to work and earn money enough for us all. The boys at school all mean to be rich when

they can read well; so do I. It will be very easy to get money then. All rich men can read many books, and poor men can read none. Learning to read does it; so the boys and the teacher say."

He thought that learning to read books written many hundreds of years ago would in some way give him power over money. The older he grew the more he determined to become rich. Nor was it strange. He had learned by a terrible experience what the poor must suffer, nor had he forgotten the comforts that wealth gives.

When Choh Lin had gone to school a short time he was told to bring writing-material, so that he might learn to write. Some paper, a writing-stone, a cake of ink, a tiny water-pot and a pointed brush of fine hair were bought for him, and he was ready to become a writer. When he brought these the teacher took the little pot, and, filling it with water, poured some into a hollow place in one end of the stone, and then, taking the stick of ink, he dipped the end in the water and rubbed it on the stone, thus inking it. He then took the brush, which was a hollow stick of bamboo about as thick as a goose-quill, in one end of which was a bunch of soft hair that tapered down to a point. This end, when the brush was not in use, was kept covered by a small cap or piece of bamboo large enough to slip on the handle. Taking off the cap, the teacher dipped the brush in water, touched it lightly on the inked stone, and began writing on the paper some

Chinese words for the little boy to copy. After writing a few simple ones he gave Choh Lin the brush and, showing him how to hold it, told him to write the words. He made slow and rough work at first, but, encouraged by the teacher and the other boys, he soon learned to make something that looked like the copy.

After a while Choh Lin was taught to add and subtract, but not much more of arithmetic. For nearly a year he continued at school, studying every day except on feast-days. He never played truant, for he was too anxious to learn; besides, he liked to go to school, where he could be with other boys, and where the teacher would prevent their taking advantage of his size.

Mrs. Lee was pleased to hear from the teacher of the progress her boy made, and would gladly have continued him at school had she been able. The teacher said all the good he could of Choh Lin, since he wished to have as many pupils as he could get. Since each one paid for his own tuition, the more scholars the more money for the master. But what he said of Choh Lin was meant to be the truth. The little boy had become a great favorite with the teacher. He was well behaved and made rapid progress in his studies.

At the end of the year Mrs. Lee found herself unable to keep her son at school. She and the teacher regretted it, but none felt so sorry as Choh Lin. With the end of school he saw his bright

hopes disappear; and, more than that, he was obliged to go back to his old work of hunting for wood and oysters, crabs and other food.

Another drought had begun. Work was scarce, food was rapidly growing dearer, and both boys were needed to help keep the family from starvation. Fortunately, the drought did not last as long nor was food as scarce as during the former famine. When the rain fell again, Choh Lin was disappointed at not being able to go back to school. Unable to study without a teacher, he forgot much of what he had learned.

After the second drought Chi Lap, who had now become quite a large boy, concluded that Tay Soa was a good place for famines not only, but a good place to move away from; so he determined to go down to the large city of Amoy, about a dozen miles away, and see if he could not find something to do there. He went down on one of the boats going to Amoy, and came back with the news that he had found something to do. He was going to the city as a peddler, to sell candies and other good things for those who had a sweet tooth. To start would take but little money, and he had been told that he could earn considerable at it. His mother was willing to let him try, while the grandmother opposed it, and Choh Lin felt that he could not let his brother go. But Chi Lap did go, and stayed in Amoy too, coming home now and then for a day or two.

CHAPTER XV.

STONING THE DEVIL.

ONE day a number of the men in Tay Soa were talking together earnestly about a disease raging in some villages not far away. As usual, the stories of the ravages of the disease had grown by traveling. Some said that many were sick and some had already died, while others said that half the people were sick and that a great number were dead. It was said, too, that the disease was spreading to the different villages and approaching Tay Soa. This last news had aroused the people to great excitement, and they were considering what should be done to keep the disease from their village.

"What can we do?" asked one. "If the evil spirits choose to send such calamities, we must submit and suffer. If we are to die we must die, and that is all we can do."

"What do you think, Uncle Kim?" asked one of the younger men of an old man in the group who had stood by quietly listening, but now and then shaking his head at remarks that seemed to displease him. "You are older than we, and far more wise;

do you think that we can do anything to prevent this disease reaching Tay Soa?"

"I think we can keep the disease away from our village," he replied, "but the disease is not so much to be dreaded as something else." Then he stopped and looked as wise as he could at one and another of the company.

"Something else? What else, Uncle Kim?" asked several voices at once. "Please tell us. You are wise; years have taught you many things; let us drink from the fountain of your wisdom."

After waiting a while and looking at one and another, the old man began: "Disease is not so bad as that which brings it. All such evils are only weapons of the bad spirits, who use them to torment us. We cannot see evil spirits—we can only see their acts—but we can feel them; and unless we do something soon we shall feel one act of the evil one more than we have felt for many days."

"But what can we do?" asked many eager voices. "Can we do anything to keep away the evil?"

"Yes," replied the old man; "but when I tell it you will not heed. Many years ago, when the fathers lived, we had not such calamities as now visit our country. Then all was happiness and peace. The fathers knew how to care for themselves and their children, but we have gone from their wisdom into ignorance and sorrow."

"What did the fathers do?" asked an impatient one.

"Keep silence," said another, "and let age and wisdom speak."

Uncle Kim began again: "All evil comes from the devil. He hates men and wishes to cause them pain and misery, but if he sees them in trouble and in great suffering, he lets them alone. He is content if they suffer, no matter who brings the suffering."

"What do you mean, venerable Uncle Kim?" asked a young man. "Remember, some of us are but youthful; we have only read a few characters in the child's book, while you have searched through the great volumes of deep wisdom."

"Oh, there is no need of telling you, young men; you are giving up the customs of our fathers, and all are suffering for it. If you would learn wisdom from the past, all might yet be well."

"Uncle Kim, please tell us what customs we should follow, and we will gladly go back to them," said one of the older men. "No doubt we have gone astray, but now we come back as children to learn lessons from a father, and here we wait for him to teach us, and we will follow."

"In the time of the fathers," said the old man, "they tried a way to keep off disease and other evil, and it succeeded."

As he stopped a moment, one man, impatient and ready to show his wisdom, asked, "What was it? Did they offer sacrifices to the evil spirits?"

"No," continued the old man; "sacrifices to the

devil are useless. He cares nothing for what we offer, but for what we suffer. Give sacrifices to the gods and human blood to devils."

"What do you mean?" asked one who seemed startled.

"To escape the torments of the devil we must take the work out of his hands," replied Uncle Kim.

"How can we do that?" was asked.

"By causing each other to suffer."

"In what way?"

"This is the way the fathers did," continued the old man, "as they told me when I was a child: They gathered on the plain, and, dividing into two parties, they separated a little distance and then began throwing stones at each other. Often men were hit, wounded, and some were even killed. The devil, seeing them fight in this way, thought that they were enemies and would do each other all the injury necessary without his help, so he let them alone."

"Did they not have any sickness then? Did not people suffer and die?" asked a young man.

"Some of them did," was the reply, "but not as many as now. The devil can work far more evil than we can."

"Do you mean," asked one, "that we are to stone each other to death to save the devil the trouble of killing us?"

"Do you believe that any of us will never die?" was the answer.

"Do you mean that the devil will let us alone if we hurt each other enough?" asked another.

"Certainly," replied Uncle Kim. "That is the way the fathers did; and if we would live as happily and as long as they, we must do as the fathers did."

"That may be all right," spoke a young man, "but I don't see why we should do the bad work of evil spirits. It is enough that we suffer from them, and not do their work too, and that upon our own friends and relatives."

"It is not in that way that we are to look at it," said an older man. "As I understand Uncle Kim, we must, by doing some of the devil's work, keep him from doing any of it, and so escape a great deal of trouble.—Is it not so, venerable uncle?"

"Right! right!" replied the old man. "Besides, it is better to receive wounds at the hand of a friend than of an enemy."

"Uncle Kim is right," said a man who had until now been silent. "When we take the matter into our own hands we control it."

"Why need we hit each other at all?" inquired a man. "We may stand far off and throw stones without hurting any one."

"Yes," said another, "and we need not throw heavy stones nor take good aim, either."

"You are young and I am old," spoke Uncle Kim. "Take the advice of an old man: Not stones, nor throwing them, will satisfy the devil,

but the pain we suffer, the wounds we receive, the blood spilled,—only these satisfy the evil ones."

Some of the Tay Soa boys, Chi Lap among them, heard this consultation, for it took place before he went to Amoy; and the boys held a council too. They, however, waited and listened quietly until the men had decided on the time and place when they would "stone the devil," as it was called. When all arrangements had been made by the men the boys made their plans. They agreed to follow the men and wait until the battle was fairly begun, then take part in it. Some knew of certain men whom they would try to hit if a good chance offered.

When both consultations were over Chi Lap hurried home and told his younger brother of the proposed fight, and urged him to go along to see men stone the devil.

"Stone the devil?" repeated Choh Lin; "how can they see him to hit him?"

"Oh, they don't hit him, but they throw stones at each other to save him the trouble. I think that each one supposes the other is the devil, and so tries to hit him."

Chi Lap told what he had heard, and of course his little brother was eager to go along. When the time came for the stoning the grandmother, seeing the two boys start away, called them, "Where are you going?"

"Going to see the men stone the devil," was the reply.

"'Stone the devil'!" said the old lady. "Do they mean to do that here? Then there is safety. If the people are coming back to the old customs, the favor of the gods will come back to us. But do you boys mean to throw stones with the rest? You must not," said she, changing her voice to one of command; "you will be hurt, perhaps killed."

"Well, if we are killed," said Chi Lap, half in sport, "it will save the lives of others. It it be good to throw stones and hurt people, then it must be good for us to do it, and good for us to be hurt."

"No, no! Let others suffer, but not yourselves." Not until the boys had promised to keep entirely out of the way of the stones would she allow them to go.

The men had gathered when the boys reached the place, and were dividing into two parties. It was a large level spot of ground where they had met, and stones were plenty. After dividing, the two parties separated about a stone's throw; when all were ready one side began throwing stones at the other; these were speedily flung back. At first each side seemed careful not to hit any in the other party, but some were hit; this made them a little angry, and those struck became willing to let the other side suffer. Stones were thrown with more violence and better aim. The parties grew excited and the battle became a real one. Many bruises were given and received, blood flowed, and some were forced to leave the field, yet the battle kept

on. Instead of stoning the devil, the men stoned each other, and in earnest too. The fight did not last long. Three lay on the field helpless and seemingly lifeless. When their friends noticed their condition they called to the others to stop, but they did not, and more cuts and wounds were given.

At length the battle ceased. Four now lay on the field as if dead. Around them friends gathered and spoke, but received no answer except a groan from one of them. The other three were senseless, and one of them lifeless. The dead and the wounded were carried from the field to the village amid great lamentations. The grief, no doubt, was sincere, but all felt grateful that some had been hurt, and each was thankful that the wounded did not include himself. One of the three borne from the field alive died before morning, and a few days after a third one gave up his life, while the fourth slowly recovered. Others who had been wounded carried the marks for many days; some never lost the scars.

The stoning was a subject for talk among the boys for many a day. Some thought it noble, while others regarded it as great fun, but a few thought it a terrible thing and very cruel. The tender heart of Choh Lin was greatly affected by it. When he talked to his grandmother he spoke of it sometimes with tears. "Why is it, grandmother," said he, "that people must hurt each other in this way to please the evil spirits? Why do not the

gods keep the evil spirits away? Why do not they take care of the people instead of allowing them to fight each other?"

"There are two kinds of spirits," said the grandmother—"the evil and the good. The gods and the good spirits on one side are fighting against the devil and the evil spirits on the other. If the gods and the good spirits should always have their way, the evil ones would mass together and produce some dreadful calamity. The way to keep the evil ones from this is to pretend that we are their friends and do the work that they like to see."

"But, grandmother," said the child, "by doing this work the people are forgetting the gods and serving their enemy."

"My son," said the old lady, "we can sometimes best serve our friends by seeming to be their enemies."

"Do you mean that by stoning each other we are doing each other service?"

"Yes," replied she; "by hurting some we save many from being hurt much more by the evil one. All he wants is to see us in trouble, to see us suffer; and if he sees us injuring each other, he sits down and rests."

Chi Lap had his own views of doing the work of the devil. "That may do for his children," said he, "but not for the children of men. If the evil one wishes to see us injured, let him do it himself, and not set us at it, and then give us no pay except

wounds, bruises and death. Let those who will, do the work of the devil; I will not."

With great show of sorrow the dead were buried. The people felt that they must make all the greater mourning to let the evil ones see how much they suffered. There were others besides Chi Lap who regarded this whole proceeding as foolish, but the great majority looked upon it as a noble act, while a few of the aged rejoiced to see a revival of one of the old customs of their country.

There may be a gradual change of customs throughout China, but it is very slow, and in many places the customs of thousands of years ago are yet followed by the people. It is only in and near the seaports, where the people have mingled with other nations, that there has been much change of customs. Whether this strange and foolish superstition of stoning the devil was ever common throughout China the author does not know, but it certainly was very strong many years ago in the country around Tay Soa, and of late years it has been revived. One of these attempts at doing the work of the devil the writer saw on the plain north of Tay Soa some years ago.

CHAPTER XVI

REBELLION AT AMOY.

WE go back in our story two years and take the reader to the city of Amoy, about twelve or thirteen miles from Tay Soa.

Amoy is built on the landward side of the island bearing the same name. The people call the island and city *A Mung* in the spoken language, though some Chinese speak the name very much as we do, and thus foreigners have got the name Amoy. In the written language, which is the same all over China, the name is "Ha Bun," though the meaning is the same as Amoy—"mansion-door;" that is, Amoy is the mansion-door of China, or its principal opening. Until lately it was the chief naval station of the empire.

Amoy City contains about two hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants, yet so compactly built is the town and so narrow are the streets that the whole city does not cover much more than a square mile of ground. It is a walled town, but the larger part of it lies outside the walls. Every old Chinese city has high walls surrounding what was the city in former years. But as towns grow and walls do

not, many of the cities have by far the larger part of their inhabitants outside the walls. Within the walls the mandarins, or officers, live, and there the soldiers are usually stationed.

Besides the walls, Amoy has gates at the ends of its streets, which are shut at night and opened at daylight, so that none can enter the city or go out after dark.

In the spring of 1853 rumors reached Amoy of the approach of a rebel army whose purpose was to capture the city. It was during the great Tai-Ping rebellion, which came so near destroying the present Chinese government. Armies of rebels were moving in different directions, capturing the cities that lay in their way. Word reached Amoy that one of these armies was coming to the coast. There was great excitement in the city, and it was feared that there would be terrible fighting, as there was an imperial army in the town and a number of war-vessels lay in the harbor. The people professed to be loyal to the government, but many at heart were friends of the rebellion.

Not long after the report of the approach of the rebels their army appeared. The mandarins boasted of what they would do to the "long red-haired robbers," as they called the rebels, and some believed that the government soldiers would be able to keep the invaders out of the city.

Late in the afternoon the rebels came in sight of the city. Nothing was done to prevent their enter-

ing the harbor from the river on the west. The soldiers of the government remained in the walled part of the town, and the mandarin fleet lay at anchor north of the city. The gates of the city-walls were closed, however, and all the gates of the streets shut.

Early the next morning the rebels were found on the island of Amoy. They had landed not far from the government fleet. Not a war-vessel had opposed their landing, not a shot had been fired. Not only were the rebels on the island; they were in front of the city, and ready with the light of day to make an attack on the gates of the streets. But they found no need of that. All the street-gates stood open before them. Early in the morning the rebel army entered the city, and without bloodshed took possession of the unwalled part of the town. The people quietly received their new masters. The walled part of the city was still closed to the invading army. The four gates were kept securely fastened and strongly guarded. After taking full possession of the rest of the town, the rebels marched to the walled part and began an assault on three of the four gates. The fourth they neglected as though it did not exist. Not a rebel soldier was seen near it. After a short assault the three gates gave way and the attacking army entered. Not an imperial soldier was to be seen inside. The fourth gate stood wide open, and through it might be seen the rear of the government army hastening to the war-vessels

in the harbor. Every soldier and every mandarin had escaped, and all were soon on board the government vessels, which weighed anchor, hoisted sail and moved away, leaving the city entirely in the hands of the rebels. Not a man was killed and only one or two wounded in the taking of the city. The rebels were delighted, most of the people satisfied and the imperial army not greatly troubled.

Why the mandarins so readily gave up the city is uncertain. Perhaps they had heard so much of rebel victories that they dared not meet them; and it is possible that some of the officials of the government made enough money by delivering up the city to the rebels to make defeat easy to bear. Battles more bloodless and more successful can be fought in China by silver than by the sword.

It is not rare for attacking armies in China to neglect one gate of a walled town. The reason given for this is that a rat, when he finds a hole for escape, will run away, but when all ways of escape are cut off he will fight.

Not long did the rebels peaceably hold possession of Amoy. When the news reached Pekin the mandarins were ordered to retake the city at once.

Two weeks after the government fleet sailed northward from Amoy, there came a fleet of imperial war-vessels into the same harbor from the south. The mandarins tried to enter the harbor and take the city by surprise, but the rebels knew of their coming and knew their plans. Instead of

coming in front of the city, the vessels anchored some distance away, and at once the soldiers landed and marched to assault the place on the side away from the water. As they advanced, sure of victory, they were suddenly and furiously attacked by rebel soldiers hidden in the valley south of the city. Partly recovering from the surprise, the mandarins tried to urge on their soldiers to battle. Many did stand, but they were too much frightened to fight with any hope of success, and soon the battle became a rout. The government soldiers fled, some toward the city, others to the vessels. Those who reached the war-vessels went away with them as soon as possible; those who found no hiding-place in the city were caught and held as prisoners, if not killed.

This was a very different battle from that by which the rebels took the city, as the many wounded and dead proved. Not content with driving off the mandarin army, the rebels determined to capture every soldier hiding in the town. Little bands of victors after the fight marched through the streets searching for fugitives; whenever one was found he was hurried off to the walled part of the town, there to be held for a ransom if unwilling to turn rebel, or put where he would never fight rebels any more.

All the afternoon of this day the rebel soldiers were searching houses or marching through the streets with their prisoners. The excitement was great. The shouts of the victorious soldiers, the screams of terrified women and the cries of fright-

ened children made the people almost wild with terror.

This day, as well as that on which the rebels captured the city, was the Sabbath—a day like others to nearly all the people in Amoy, but there were a few to whom it was a sacred day. About ten years before, missionaries from America, and later from England, had come to Amoy to preach the gospel, and at this time there were quite a number of Christians in the young churches established in the city. These, after morning worship, were startled by the firing and the noise of battle, and later heard the shouts of the victorious rebels as they pursued the fugitive soldiers. An officer of the defeated army, Sok Tai by name, came to the door of the house of the Rev. John Stronach, an English missionary, and begged to be saved from the vengeance of the rebels. Sok Tai, though an officer in the army, was a Christian and well known to Mr. Stronach. The good missionary at once took the man into his house and promised to protect him. Soon after the rebel soldiers appeared at the door and asked for the officer hidden there. The missionary told the soldiers that they had no right to enter his house, and that he would not give up to them any good man who asked for protection. In vain the soldiers pleaded and threatened; the fugitive was not given to them. Mr. Stronach was so well known in the city as a good and brave man that the rebels dared not attempt to take the hiding soldier from his house.

They feared not merely the missionary, but the English nation. Wishing to keep the friendship of foreigners, the soldiers left the fugitive in Mr. Stronach's charge for the time. Afterward the rebel officers demanded Sok Tai from the missionary, but the demand was met with a polite though firm refusal, nor could anything that was said or done compel the brave missionary to give up to death a man who had been doing his duty in fighting against the enemies of his country. Not long after, Mr. Stronach sent his charge by a foreign vessel to Shanghai, where he remained until the rebels left the city, when he returned, gave up his position in the army and became a preacher of the gospel. He was until lately, and may yet be, a preacher in one of the churches of Amoy, where he has done faithful service in trying to bring the same city to his imperial Master, Jesus.

Arrangements had been made for a baptismal service that afternoon in the first Christian church of Amoy. The Christians from all parts of the city had been invited to be present to unite in the service connected with the baptism. When news of the battle reached the missionaries, and they saw the excitement in the city, they feared that it would be impossible to hold the service. People were hiding everywhere, while excited men were rushing through the streets. Soon after came the shouts of the victors as they chased fugitives through the streets or led captives to the walled part of the town.

This seemed anything but the time for a religious meeting, yet the missionaries, thinking that a few Christians might gather, went to the church intending to hold a prayer-meeting with those who might attend. When they reached the place they found a number of people waiting for them, and among them the converts who were expecting to be baptized. The excitement of battle could not keep them away from the house of God at such a time as this. Water was brought, and amid the shouts and uproar of the streets these who a short time before had been heathen were consecrated to God and his Church by baptism. It was a sacred, a precious service, though they did not know but that it would be their last together on earth. As the frightened sheep draw nearer together and gather closer about the shepherd when they hear the howl of the wolf, so did these followers of Jesus draw nearer together and closer to the Great Shepherd as they heard the wild screams without.

After this battle the imperial soldiers, learning a lesson from their defeat, prepared more deliberately to capture the city. For four and a half months they were gathering soldiers and making elaborate preparations for another attack. The people of Amoy knew that when it came the capture of the city would not be a bloodless one. There were gloomy forebodings. Many consultations did the Christians hold and many were the prayers offered at the mercy-seat.

It needed all the shrewdness of a Chinaman's nature to pray just right—not so much as it regarded God, but as it regarded man. The sympathy of the people was largely with the rebels, while the rebels were warm friends of foreigners and of the missionaries, and seemed to be very favorable to Christianity. To pray against such an army was a difficult thing for the Chinese Christians. The mandarins were opposed to foreigners, to missionaries and their religion, so that to pray for the national government was a severe tax for the faith of the converts. But as the missionaries had taught them to respect and pray for their rulers, the people did not know what else to do. The missionaries wisely said as little as possible about the rebellion. Quietly attending to their duties, they left the affairs of the nation in the hands of others, looking to God to overrule all for the good of the people and the furtherance of his cause.

At last the imperial fleet sailed into the harbor from the south and, passing around Ko-long-su, a small island in the harbor and half a mile west of the city, anchored at the mouth of a creek north of the town. An army landed and encamped near the walls of Amoy. The rebel fleet was anchored in front of the city and not far from the anchoring-place of the mandarin vessels. After the army had landed the imperial fleet hoisted anchor, and, sailing down toward the rebel vessels, discharged a broadside at them; then, sailing off to the westward,

it came back to its anchorage again. As soon as wind and tide permitted the rebel fleet hoisted anchor, and, sailing toward the enemy's fleet, fired a broadside and came back to its anchoring-ground. Day after day, if wind allowed, was this saluting, for it proved little more, kept up. Now and then a ball struck a vessel, more by accident than because of correct aim, and usually the result of each broadside was a bloodless victory, though to which side it would have been hard to tell. The rebels, not having enough men to garrison the city and at the same time keep up the battles on the water, were forced to gather on board their junks when the tide and wind suited, and after the brief fight hurry ashore to be ready to repel any attack that might be made on land.

The real fighting, though, was done from the walls of the city and the decks of the vessels when the guns were silent. This was done not with cannon or musket, nor yet with arrow nor dart, but with the weapon that of all kinds the Chinese soldiers know so well how to handle—the tongue. With their tongues sailors and soldiers kept up, when near enough to be heard, an almost ceaseless fire. Every kind of evil name of which they could think—and Chinese can think of a great many—they called the opposing forces. Had it been possible for hard names to kill or even wound, then there would soon not have been a soldier to handle a gun nor a sailor to hoist an anchor either in defence

of or for the capture of the city. No name seemed so well suited to the rebels, in the opinion of the mandarins, as "Ang-thau Chhat" ("red-headed robbers"), while the rebels all agreed in calling the other side "Kwoan Chhat" ("mandarin robbers").

Their guns not being of the best nor their courage the greatest, this method of warfare suited both sides, and for six weeks it was continued on the water, while the mode of fighting on land was not very different. The imperial soldiers would come near enough to the city to allow their musket-balls to fall short of the walls, and the rebels on the fortifications fired back with the same bloodless effect.

One morning very early there was a great commotion within the walls as the rebel soldiers marched out and through the city and down to their vessels. They embarked in sight of the imperial fleet, hoisted anchor and hurriedly sailed away, leaving behind some of their number who had for different reasons been delayed. The government vessels remained at anchor and did nothing whatever to hinder the escape of the rebels. As soon as they left the city the mandarin army marched in and took possession.

Now began a massacre. The capturing forces attacked the few rebels they found and cruelly butchered them. Every one else who seemed to offer resistance was at once killed, while many a one, neither soldier nor rebel, was without any reason murdered. It was necessary for the credit of the victors to report to Pekin that after a long siege the

city of Amoy had been taken, but only taken after a terrible battle in which a great number of the enemy were killed. The greater the number of slain the more would seem the courage of the conquerors. The rebels were cruel, but the mandarin soldiers were far more so. It is not the truly brave, but the cowards, who are cruel.

CHAPTER XVII.

MRS. LEE FINDS THE LIFE-GIVING GOD.

THE news of the capture of Amoy by the rebels reached Tay Soa the same day. The Tay Soa passenger-boats hurried away from the city as soon as they could, and reported that an immense number of rebels had captured Amoy and driven away the government soldiers. Proof of this soon followed, as the government fleet was before long seen to sail around to the north of Amoy Island.

Some were well pleased to know that the rebels had come so near and had so easily driven out the hated mandarins, while a few were troubled. They did not wish to see the government overthrown, and asked only for peace. They had seen enough of the clan-wars, or battles between the people of different families and villages, and thought that if such small wars proved so destructive to property, a war between the whole government and a large army of rebels would be worse. But a great many did not care. They had little to lose, and war might give them a chance to gain something.

Chinese know very little about true patriotism or love of country. While they believe theirs to be

the best country of the world, they do not deem the mandarins the best rulers. They know that many are dishonest, cruel and care little for the country or the people if themselves may but gain plenty of money. While there are officers in China, and probably many, who are true patriots, most of the people, at least of the lower and middle classes, believe that their rulers love money more than anything else; nor are they far wrong. Why should they think otherwise? The people themselves love money even more than Americans do—can more be said?—and they judge their rulers by themselves.

The capture of Amoy gave the people of Tay Soa much to talk about and the timid ones many an anxious thought; but when the boats went safely to and from Amoy after the rebels had possession, their fears slowly passed away. After the defeat of the government soldiers in the battle of A-Mung-Kong those who were friendly to the rebels were not slow to speak. They prophesied that soon the government of the whole country would change hands and that the rebel leader would become emperor. It was said that the rebels were enemies of the gods, and that they worshiped a foreign god, and if successful would force all the Chinese to give up the worship of their gods.

"If they are enemies of the gods," said Choh Lin's grandmother, "then the mandarins will destroy the long-haired* robbers. Any people who

* When China was conquered by the Mantchu Tartars, about

fight the gods fight against themselves, and should be overthrown."

"They may be overthrown," spoke Chi Lap (this was before he had gone to Amoy), "but it will be because they have not enough soldiers, rather than because they have not enough gods to help them. Gods that cannot take care of people when there is peace will not be likely to do so when there is war."

"You are a bad boy," replied the old lady angrily; "I only wonder that the gods let you live at all. I hope that they will teach you to speak better of them, and that—that—that they will overthrow the rebels and let you, and such as you, see that the gods are mighty."

When the news of the retreat of the rebels reached Tay Soa the old lady was happy. She said that the gods had at last shown whom they would help. Chi Lap had little to say, though he did not believe that the gods of China had much to do with the failure of the rebels. He only wondered why they, who had so successfully held the city, did not fight a battle before giving it up.

It was some time after the mandarins had recaptured Amoy that Chi Lap went to the city to become a peddler. Perhaps the removal of her son

two hundred and fifty years ago, the people were ordered to shave their heads, and only allow the hair on the crown to grow long and be braided in a queue as now. The Tai-Ping rebels did not shave their heads, but allowed the hair to grow long; hence they were often spoken of as "the long-haired rebels" and "long-haired robbers."

gave Mrs. Lee a new idea. In Tay Soa and the villages near considerable cotton cloth, or muslin —more than was used by the people—was woven, and some of it was sold elsewhere. Mrs. Lee saw that some was taken to Amoy for sale, and thought that she might try to make a little money in this way. This seemed much easier than working in and around the village wherever she could find employment.

She bought some cotton cloth from her friends and started one morning in a passenger-boat for Amoy. She had been to the city before, and had no difficulty in finding a sale for her goods. Selling for a fair profit, she determined to try again, and soon had quite a trade. But she bought more than cloth; she also took eggs and poultry, as well as other things, for sale in Amoy; and after a while one and another of her friends in Tay Soa had her make purchases in the city for them. As she made a profit on what she bought as well as on what she sold, she could thus comfortably support herself and her family.

Chi Lap, being now in the city, took care of himself, so Mrs. Lee had only four instead of five to support. Choh Lin, however, was unable to go to school, much as he wished to learn, because he was needed at home while his mother was away, nor were they yet rich enough to get along without his help in gathering fuel and oysters and other articles of food.

Tay Soa was on a bay that became bare at low tide, so that boats were compelled to go out and come in with high water, and were thus obliged, as tides came about an hour later every day, to start sometimes very late in the day and again very early in the morning. Nor could they leave Amoy unless the wind was favorable until the tide ran toward Tay Soa. Even if they did go homeward before the tide suited, they must wait some distance from home until there was enough water in Tay Soa Bay to sail up to the landing. Hence passengers were often obliged to stay in Amoy several hours, and if a very strong north-east wind blew they had to stay a day or more in the city.

One day Mrs. Lee, after having sold her goods, while waiting for the boat to start, took a walk through the city. She had heard that foreigners lived in the city, and she wanted to see one of their homes. Having friends in Amoy, she persuaded one of them, who lived not far from the home of the American missionaries, to take her to the place. Accompanied by a little girl, the two women went to the house of the missionaries. It was a Chinese-built house, somewhat changed and enlarged. The missionaries lived in the second story, while on the ground-floor was a chapel. The chapel-door stood open as the two approached, but no one was in the room. It was full of benches, and Mrs. Lee exclaimed as they entered, "Oh, see how many seats the foreigners have! How many of them there

must be! What a large room! how high and light! But what is that at the other end?"

Her friend could not give very satisfactory answers to her questions, but suggested that this was perhaps a "worship-hall."

"What!" spoke Mrs. Lee, "is this where the foreigners worship their gods? or do they keep the tablets of their ancestors here? I would like to see their gods; but where are the foreigners?"

Her friend had heard of the chapel and worship, but could not say anything about it from what she had seen. While they were talking the Chinese chapel-keeper appeared, and, greeting them respectfully, asked what they wanted.

"Oh, nothing," replied Mrs. Lee; "we only came for amusement."

"This is not a place for amusement," said the man, "but a place to hear the doctrine."

"Very well, then, we will hear the doctrine," spoke Mrs. Lee, though she did not know what was meant by "the doctrine." Like all other Chinese, she was anxious to see and hear everything.

The chapel-keeper invited them to be seated, and then began to tell of the doctrines of the Bible. At first none of the three were interested, but as the good man told the story of Jesus, new to Mrs. Lee, her attention was drawn, her eyes were fixed on the speaker, and, almost breathless, she listened to catch each word as it fell from his lips. It was a new, a strange doctrine, but it awoke in her mind all those

old longings for the life-giving God. She asked few questions at first, yet seemed to drink in every word. She was surprised, astonished, yet delighted, to hear this doctrine.

After a while the speaker stopped, as he said, "I cannot make this as plain as the missionary can. I am like one who has been blind all his life, and then suddenly finds his eyes opened to the brightness of noonday. My eyes are dazzled with the light. I see, I wonder, I am delighted, but dazzled. I can only tell little, yet that little shows how much light there is. The missionary himself will soon be down to preach the doctrine, and he will make it all plain to you. He was born in the light and has ever lived in it, and knows ten thousand times more than I do. Come back again soon and hear him speak."

Mrs. Lee went away determined to return as soon as the missionary came. Her heart was full. Her friend did not seem to care to talk of the new doctrine, but Mrs. Lee could speak of nothing else. It was as if her thirsty soul had at last found the water for which she had longed so many years. As she thought of what the chapel-keeper had said the feeling of gladness began to give place to one of sorrow. That story of Christ's suffering for sinners —for all the sinners of the world, and for herself as well as others—was one that she could not understand. She did understand the suffering and the love, but how could Christ know about her? If it

were true, and this foreign God really knew about her, and then died to save her, surely she must be a great sinner; and how much he must love! How much he must have loved mankind to die for them! How different this story from the stories of their gods of China! How different this God must be from those of her country! They were only willing to give favors after they had been well paid for it, and too often they took all they could get and gave nothing in return. This God gave his best first, and to the worst as well as to the best of mankind, and then kept giving favors afterward to all, only asking in return that people should love and trust and serve him.

Before the time for service came Mrs. Lee was at the chapel waiting. When the missionary appeared she had little thought about his strange dress or his appearance, but only of the doctrine she hoped to hear. When the hymn was given out she listened intently. The missionary began by saying, "Now, great family, come let us sing and praise God." When the singing began Mrs. Lee thought she had never heard anything like it. It certainly was very different from the chanting and singing of the Chinese that she had heard. The singing, however, was not of the best. That did not matter to Mrs. Lee; she was not a singer herself, yet that singing pleased her. When she saw that many others sang, she wanted to join, but did not dare let her voice attempt it, though her heart sang with the rest. She

felt that her heart could join in the prayer, and she did pray with her whole soul. As the good missionary thanked God for his mercy toward sinners in sending his only Son to die for them, she felt that he was uttering her own thanks; and then as he told God of their sinfulness and begged for pardon, she felt that the missionary was praying her own prayer. Those strange, wonderful words which he read from a book that he called "God's book" went to her heart. Mrs. Lee's interest did not lessen with the sermon. It was a simple statement of the truths of the gospel: it told of man's sinfulness, of the trouble and sorrow that sin caused, and what ruin it would at last bring to the soul; it told how the world failed to find any remedy for sin, and then told of Jesus the great Saviour from sin.

Doubtless, God directed the preacher to present just that truth; it certainly was what Mrs. Lee needed and what she had longed for for years. It told her of the life-giving God; it taught her also that she needed another life—a life that this God alone could give, for sin was working death in her.

At last Mrs. Lee had found the God she had sought so long, and it was the God of foreigners! At once she determined to make him her own God. It seemed now as if she were in a new world. The darkness in which she had been groping was gone; instead of being lost, and not knowing where to go or what to do, she saw a plain path before her. It is true, she could see only a little way in that path,

but she could see the path, and she was sure it was the right one. Seeing the path, she had only one thought—to enter it at once.

After Mrs. Lee had learned this much and thought it over she began to understand how little she did know. One thing she saw—while it surprised her, yet it gave her confidence in the missionary: he seemed to know all there was in her heart. She was certain he had not seen her before, but that he knew her feelings, and had told them, was just as certain; so she felt sure that he would be able to tell all she needed to know. Afterward, in speaking of that first sermon and the talk of the chapel-keeper, she said, "Among the tens of thousands of people whom I have met, I never before met any that knew what was in me; but these men," meaning the chapel-keeper as well as the missionary, "have told me what was in my very bones."

When the service closed she was obliged to hasten to the boat, but it was with a determination to come again soon and hear more of the new good doctrine. Part of her business in Amoy at this time was to buy, for others as well as herself, incense-sticks, idolatrous paper and other things used in idol- and spirit-worship; but after hearing the talk of the chapel-keeper and the sermon of the missionary she determined not to buy anything for idol-worship nor to have anything whatever to do with idolatry, or with the worship of the spirits of the dead. On the boat she could hardly help telling the people

what she had heard, but as it is not considered proper for a woman to speak much in the presence of men, she kept her thoughts to herself.

She was sure that her children and mother-in-law would be as glad to hear about the new religion as she had been. She pictured to herself their surprise and joy when they heard of this God who so loved the world, and for their own sakes too, and not for the good he could get from them.

After reaching home she first showed her purchases, thinking it would be all the better to wait to tell about the new God until all were quiet. After she had shown all her purchases the mother-in-law asked, "Where are the incense-sticks, paper and other things for offering to the gods and to the spirits of the dead?"

"I have brought none," replied Mrs. Lee; "I did not buy any. We will no longer need such things; they will be of no use to us any more."

"No use?" said the old lady in amazement; "what do you mean?"

"I mean," answered Mrs. Lee, "that we have found the true God and will no longer worship idols."

"'The true God'!" repeated the grandmother; "of course ours are the true gods. Why, then, did not you bring the things with which to worship them?"

"I did not bring them because I have found a better way of worshiping the true God. The gods

of our fathers are not the true gods, but I know the true God now. He is the life-giving God whom I sought so long in vain in all the temples. He is the one we need. I am so glad that we know about him now! Listen while I tell you."

Then she told what she had heard, expecting to find her mother-in-law as much interested as she was. Choh Lin listened eagerly, and his sister was attentive too, and seemed rather pleased than otherwise; but the grandmother, instead of listening with pleasure, grew displeased, and then angry, and would hardly allow her daughter-in-law to finish before she said angrily, "Is that the god you have found? It is a foreign god, and you have been telling one of the false stories of the foreigners. If they have gods, we do not want them. We will not have them. You shall not worship them. You must not teach the children anything about them or their doctrine. I will not allow it." And then, as if fearful that she had shown too much anger, for she was becoming a little careful of what she said to Mrs. Lee, she continued in a milder tone, "The gods of the Middle Kingdom are the gods for us; the worship of the fathers should be our worship. If there are better gods than our own, our fathers would have found it out long ago. Be assured that they found the best there are, and taught their children to worship them."

Mrs. Lee was surprised, disappointed, sad, and for a moment almost angry, and would have given

a sharp reply had not her mother-in-law spoken more mildly at the last. She replied in a gentle and almost pleading voice, "But this doctrine went to my heart as a bird to its nest, and is sitting there. It is just what I have wanted to hear, but none of our priests or people could tell me. I have longed for this ever since the cruel relatives killed me and I was brought back to life again. It is the doctrine of the heart."

"Yes," replied the other, angrily, "and your longing brought on us all the trouble we have suffered. It has robbed me of my son and his children of their property. You have been unfaithful to the gods, and we have all suffered for that unfaithfulness. Do not bring on us greater trouble by deserting the gods of our people altogether."

Choh Lin's sister, who was usually quiet, could not hear her mother so unjustly accused, even by the grandmother, without some reply. "Grandmother," said she, "mother was faithful to the gods before father died, and afterward she did all she could to serve them. Not until her husband and her property were taken away, and she was almost robbed of life, did she cease her faithful worship of the gods. And even then she did not desert the gods; she only sought the one who had brought her back to life."

"You girls don't know anything about such things," replied the grandmother petulantly.

Choh Lin, who had listened with close attention

to his mother's story, felt hurt at the rebuke of the grandmother, and as soon as she had answered his sister he asked, "Grandmother, did the gods take my father away? and did they allow the relatives to rob us of our property?"

"Of course they did," replied she sharply. "They punish those who desert them."

"But mother did not desert the gods, grandmother. She went to the temple and prayed very often when my father was sick. I remember about it, and she prayed and offered the gods many sacrifices afterward, too, asking them to take care of us and keep the relatives from taking away our property; yet her prayers were not answered. We lost all, even though she begged the gods so much to take care of us. Grandmother"—and he spoke slowly —"the gods deserted mother; they deserted us all, and not we them."

The old lady looked with amazement at the boy, and then said, "Have the evil spirits entered our family? What will come next?" Saying this, she walked hastily away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

PERSECUTION.

MRS. LEE soon made another visit to Amoy and to the mission-chapel, where she heard more of the truth. She found business calling her oftener to the city now than formerly, and each time she visited the chapel to have a talk with the chapel-keeper or missionary if it were not time for service. There was no more earnest listener than she when the gospel was preached, nor any inquirer more attentive to what was said in the inquiry-meetings which she attended. Rapidly she learned the truth, and soon became able to teach others.

Mrs. Lee was ready to talk of the new religion to any people whom she met, but soon learned that it was wisdom to say nothing to her mother-in-law. The old lady became excited and angry whenever the gospel was referred to, and often forbade Mrs. Lee to speak to any one in the family of the new religion. The daughter, however, listened attentively and eagerly when her mother spoke of the Saviour. When the two were alone, then more questions were asked by the younger, not a few,

however, being unanswered until Mrs. Lee had made another trip to the city.

Choh Lin had become at once interested in the gospel, nor was he afraid to talk of the new religion even in the presence of his grandmother, though he soon learned that it was best to keep silence on the subject when she was near. The story of the love of Jesus for men had won the heart of the boy, and he was eager to know more about the Saviour. He watched anxiously for the return of his mother from the city; and often had more questions to ask about what she had learned from the missionaries than what she had seen and done while there.

When Chi Lap, on his visits home, heard about the gospel, he too listened with interest, and was pleased; but his thoughts were so full of money-making in Amoy that he had more to say about that than about the new religion. A dread seemed to come over him after a while lest the people in the village should persecute them for being Christians, and he urged Choh Lin to say nothing about the gospel to others, and even begged his mother not to tell the neighbors that she had determined to become a Christian.

"It is all right," said he, "to pray to the foreign God—he is much better than the gods of China—but pray to him when others do not see you, and don't neglect the worship of the idols entirely. The people will not care how much you worship foreign gods as long as you do not desert their own."

Choh Lin refused to be entirely silent, and his mother would tell her friends of the life-giving God; nor did she stop with that: she urged them to take him as their God.

The grandmother made every effort to lead her daughter-in-law back to idolatry and to the worship of the spirits. She tried to persuade Mrs. Lee to give up her Amoy business, hoping in this way to keep her from the influence of the missionaries. She forbade her daughter-in-law going to the chapel, and threatened her with severe punishment if she dared disobey. Mrs. Lee was not a woman to be hindered by threats from doing what she believed to be her duty as well as her right; so she continued her business in Amoy and her visits at the chapel. There were no Christians near Tay Soa, nor was there any Christian service nearer than Amoy. In addition to the morning and evening worship, there was a preaching-service each day in the chapel there, and on the Sabbath there were several services in the same place. One of these was an inquiry-meeting, where all who wished to know more of the gospel were questioned about their knowledge and plainly taught the truth. As it was not proper, according to Chinese custom, for the younger women to meet with the men, Monday afternoon was set apart as a time for special service for the women. Mrs. Lee learned very soon of this woman's meeting, and attended it whenever she could, instead of the Sabbath service. The missionaries, noticing that she was almost al-

ways present on Monday instead of on Sunday, asked why she did not attend the Sabbath service, since it was allowable for women of her age to meet with the men.

"I thought that was the men's Sabbath," replied she, "and Monday the Sabbath for the women."

When told that women did not meet with the men because a part of the chapel had not been partitioned off for their use, and that the Monday afternoon meeting was intended for the young women, who could not meet with the men, and that the first day of the week was the Sabbath for all, she said that she would be there afterward on the first instead of the second day of the week; nor did she spend many Sabbaths after that away from Amoy. Usually she started for the city on Saturday, and returned on Monday to her home. On these trips she took with her not only her food, but fuel with which to cook it. The mother-in-law, noticing soon that Mrs. Lee made a point of visiting Amoy once every seven days, suspected that it had something to do with the worship of the foreign God, and tried to stop her trips to the city. She even forbade Mrs. Lee to take food along. Choh Lin, who heard his grandmother forbid his mother to take food or fuel, was so anxious to have her learn more of the gospel that he hid some of the wood gathered each week, and on Saturday carried it on board the passenger-vessel for his mother's use in the city: he even carried rice on board, so that his grandmother would

not suspect that Mrs. Lee was going to the city. They could not long keep it a secret from the old lady: she was made sure by others where her daughter-in-law went and what she did in the city. If, for any reason, Mrs. Lee did not go to Amoy to spend the Sabbath, she held a service at home with her two children, who were becoming almost as much interested in the gospel as their mother. They had learned to pray, they refused to work on the Sabbath, and were trying to live Christian lives as well as they knew how.

When their mother was away the two tried to keep up a Sabbath worship, though the old lady, taking advantage of Mrs. Lee's absence, sought to lead the children back to idolatry.

"Grandmother," said Choh Lin one day, "you don't know about this foreign God; you will not let mother tell of him, and no one else has ever told you; how can you tell whether or not he is good?"

"The gods and the religion of our fathers are good enough for me," she replied; "our ancestors believed in them and died in that faith; why should not I? Beware of this foreign religion; it will some day bring ruin upon those who heed it."

"Grandmother," answered he, "mother has worshiped the gods of the Middle Kingdom; she now worships the God of the foreigners; she has had a chance to try both. She likes the God of the foreigners best. Whom are we to follow—the one

who has tried both sides or the one who has tried only one?"

"You haven't seen the end of this worship of a foreign God," replied the old lady. "Let your mother beware when the gods visit their anger upon you."

The persuasions and warnings of his grandmother had little effect upon the boy. The doctrines his mother taught on her return from the city made him the more anxious to become a Christian, but there was one oft-repeated appeal from the grandmother that was not without its effect: "I am soon going to the spirit-world," said she, "and what will my spirit do for food and clothing if my grandchildren refuse to care for it? I must live and starve, yet starve and live. The other spirits, enjoying plenty provided by faithful relatives, will think that I have been very bad to be thus deserted by my own children. I will be deserted, shunned, hated and made an outcast in the spirit-world; and all because my children desert the religion of their fathers. I will suffer, suffer, suffer, and all because my children have deserted me; yet they say they love me. Is this, can it be, love? No, no; my worst enemy could not do more."

It needed all the mother's faith and knowledge to keep her children from turning back to superstition and idolatry when they for the first time heard this appeal. The Chinese believe that their comforts in the next life depend on their friends and

Mrs. Lee. Page 175.

relatives in this. Not only do they believe that their souls are fed and clothed by the gifts of their friends in this world, but that the respect and honor their spirits receive from their friends in the unseen world depend on the attention shown by relatives in this. The people may doubt the power of the gods, and even ridicule them, but none of them ridicule the worship of spirits: to that idolatry all are faithful.

As Mrs. Lee continued to attend the chapel-service at Amoy, and refused again and again to give anything for idolatrous feasts or the worship of the spirits of the dead in Tay Soa, the people became excited and even angry at her. They feared that the gods and the spirits of the dead would not only punish her and her family, but the whole village, for such wickedness. Some visited and talked with Mrs. Lee, begging her to return to the religion of the place and not bring calamities on the whole village. When they asked if she worshiped the foreigners' God, she said she did, and, further, that he was the only true God. Instead of trying to excuse herself, she urged them to take this as their God. She said that the religion of the foreigners was like medicine to the sick soul.

"Yes," said one, "it may be like medicine, but a medicine that poisons. It will be like opium, making you feel happy at first, but it will rob you of all you have. If you turn away from the gods and the spirits of the dead, you will soon see how

they will turn away from you. When calamity comes, what will you do?"

"Do gods and spirits in the Middle Kingdom keep calamity away?" asked she.

"Certainly they do," was the answer.

"Then why did not they keep calamity away from me when I did serve them? Instead of caring for me when I was the most faithful, they let my husband die and let others take away all of my property, and finally left me and my children to starve. I do not see how they can bring on me much worse calamities for deserting them than they allowed to come on me when I was faithful to them."

"Sol Law Chim * is right," spoke an old woman who stood by. "She lost everything while obeying our gods, and why should she continue to serve them? They took all that she gave, and then took the presents of her enemies and allowed them to rob her."

This woman was a warm friend of Mrs. Lee, and had already learned from her much about the gospel; indeed, was half inclined to give up the worship of the gods herself.

"Right or wrong," said one of the elders of the village, "Sol Law Chim must do her share toward paying for the idols' feasts and ceremonies of the village. If she stays in Tay Soa, she must do

* *Chim* means "wife or widow of—," and *Sol Law Chim* means "wife or widow of Sol Law."

as we do, and care for the temples and the worship of the ancestral tablets. This is not a foreign village, and we do not mean to have foreigners live here, nor will we permit you to observe their religion, either."

Mrs. Lee remained firm against all their persuasions, and then they resorted to threats. "We will drive you from our village," said one.

"You cannot do that," was her reply, "because I own my house."

"Your relatives will take that away," answered another.

"Then I will appeal to the mandarins," was her reply.

"They will not help you," said one of the elders of the village. "You lose all your rights by giving up the religion of your people."

"Then I will pray to the great and true God whom I serve," spoke Mrs. Lee determinedly, "and He who saved Daniel even in the lions' den will take care of me."

"Your God may be strong in his own country, but he can do nothing in the Middle Kingdom, where he will have so many gods against him."

"He is not the God of a single country, but of the whole world," replied Mrs. Lee. "He made the world and all that is in it. He is the only true God."

"Well," spoke one in a conciliatory tone, "he may be a very great God, and there may be no

harm for you to worship him, but don't give up the worship of the spirits of the dead."

"Why should I worship them?" she asked.

"Because they are mighty, and can give great favors and bring great evils upon us."

"Mighty!" replied she in contempt, "and yet they cannot take care of themselves. You believe we must give them house, clothing, food, and even drink, in the spirit-world. They are perfectly helpless; how, then, can they help or injure us?"

Determined to bring the matter to a test, one of them asked, "Will you help pay for the food to be given to our ancestors at the ancestral feast?"

For a moment Mrs. Lee was silent; then she said calmly, "No, I don't believe it can do them any good whatever; they are entirely beyond our power, and I do not mean to worship them nor care for their wants. I don't believe I can really do anything for them."

"What!" spoke one, "have you entirely given up the worship of our ancestors for an unknown god of foreigners?"

"Yes," was her reply; "he is the true God, the only one. I have given up all others for him, nor will I again worship our ancestors. The foreign God shall be my God."

"If she deserts our gods and our ancestors, she deserts us," said one, "and becomes a foreigner. Let her go; let foreigners care for her in time of famine, watch by her when she is sick, bury her

when she is dead, weep at her grave and care for her forsaken spirit. She is ours no longer;" and with contempt they were about turning away.

But others were not so willing to leave Mrs. Lee: if the gods did not punish, they felt it to be their duty to do so, and for a time it seemed that her life was in danger. Fortunately, milder counsels prevailed, and the people decided to leave Mrs. Lee to herself, counting her as a foreigner and an outcast.

Her relatives were not so easily persuaded to leave Mrs. Lee to herself. They had already heard of her deserting the worship of their ancestors, but, not knowing just how the village elders would look on that desertion, they were not in a hurry to visit her. They knew full well that if their robbery of her property were brought before the mandarins they would be made to suffer. Besides, the stories of what foreign ships of war and soldiers had done to different parts of China made them look on foreigners with dread; yet they felt that something must be done after they learned of Mrs. Lee's public decision. Being superstitious, they believed that the spirits and gods would punish all for the neglect and the sin of one. They visited Mrs. Lee, and in a polite way drew out her opinions and purposes. At first they gently advised her to give up the foreign god, but when she insisted on choosing for herself they became more determined, harsh and angry. They commanded her to have nothing more to do with foreigners, to give up the worship of the

foreign god, and threatened her with terrible punishment if she refused. Mrs. Lee told them, as she had told others, that she meant to be a Christian, and no words of theirs nor threats should turn her from that course. Seeing her calmness and determination, they thought that perhaps the foreigners would help her, so they dared do nothing more than threaten. They called her by every name of contempt they could think of.

To call a married woman or widow in China by her maiden name as well as her given name is regarded as one of the greatest insults that can be given to a woman: these relatives called her by both, and added another term whose meaning seemed to contain in it all the contempt and disgrace that words could heap upon Mrs. Lee. They went in front of the ancestral tablets, and, kneeling there, begged the spirits to make her an outcast, hated, despised by all, and then to heap upon her all the punishment and sorrow they could give. From the ancestral tablets they went to the idol temple, and there again they bowed in prayer before the gods, begging them to punish with sufferings and curses the woman who had deserted the religion of their country and the spirits of the dead. Having done all they dared, they left Mrs. Lee and treated her as an outcast who had no more claims on them than the dogs of the streets.

All this Mrs. Lee bore meekly and patiently. She had learned what the Saviour said about those

who are deserted of friends for his name's sake, and she learned that there is a blessing given for all the sufferings endured. Though the mother-in-law remained bitterly opposed to Christianity, she would not turn against her daughter-in-law. Mrs. Lee was so kind and faithful that the old lady could not help loving her. She could not but see that the foreign religion, instead of making her daughter-in-law careless of her family, had really made her more thoughtful and careful to attend to their wants. Yet she continued to oppose Mrs. Lee's religion, and used every means in her power to influence the children against the mother's faith and to train them up as idolaters. The kindness of Mrs. Lee, however, her faithful life, and, more than all, the new doctrine, influenced the children more than the grandmother's warnings.

Steadily Choh Lin gained a knowledge of the truth, and the more he knew about it the more he loved it. Yet he did not seem to understand that he was a sinner with a sinful nature, needing a new heart and the grace of God to help him live a different life. To him the true God was merely a greater one than any in China and very different from all, but one whom he might serve or not as he chose. He, however, did not hesitate to let it be known that he had taken the foreign God as his own and had given up all other worship. When the villagers and the relatives turned against his mother, they turned against him too. Even the

boys who had been his friends and companions, those who had fought with and for him in many a battle, now turned against him. It was unpopular in the village to say or do anything kindly to Choh Lin or his mother. The boys were only too ready to put into acts the words that they heard grown people speak. Those who had been enemies of Choh Lin before, but had not dared to injure him as they wished on account of his relatives and friends, now made him suffer. Many a time the poor fellow heard them hooting at him in the street and calling out, "Hoana!" ("foreigner"), "Hoana kia!" ("foreigner's child"), and sometimes they even shouted, "Hoana kui!" ("foreign devil"). They would not play nor walk with him, and hardly spoke to him. If they could trip him or push him down, enough of them were ready to do it. If he gathered wood on the shore, they would steal it or rob him of his oysters. Sometimes, when he was carrying water from a spring to his home, they came behind, and when he had nearly reached the house threw sand into the pail, or if he set it down to rest they kicked it over, thus compelling him to go again for water. They tried to set the dogs on him, threw stones and sticks at him, and annoyed him in every way possible. If he happened along when they were arranging some plan for sport, they at once stopped and said, "Here comes this foreigner child; he must not know anything about it. Let him go to his own people; he don't belong here."

Few men had kind words for him; all seemed to treat him as though he were a worthless dog, who was permitted to live only because no one cared to take the trouble of putting him out of the way.

Yet it was not always so, nor did every one treat him with unkindness. Jip longed to be friendly, and when able showed Choh Lin no little good-will, but dared not let others know it. To have played with Choh Lin or to have been seen in company with the friendless boy would have been to hear others say, "There is another foreigner! He is becoming a foreigner like Choh Lin. Keep away from them both. They will make us foreigners too."

When Chi Lap came home and saw how unkindly his mother and brother were treated—his sister being nearly grown, according to Chinese custom was not allowed to go away from her home—he felt troubled and urged them to give up the outward worship, so as not to allow the people to know that they served the foreigners' God. Yet he was unwilling that they should become idolaters again. He listened himself with no little pleasure to the doctrine, and seemed glad that his mother, brother and sister were trying to follow the new religion; but he did not understand why they were obliged to let anybody know about it. He was making a living for himself, and able to help his mother a little, but he feared that if it were known in the city that his mother and brother were Christians it would injure

his business; so he begged them to be like others outwardly and keep their religion hidden.

But neither Chi Lap's entreaties nor the threats of the village people had any effect on Mrs. Lee or Choh Lin. They had learned that Christianity was not only something of the heart, but that it must be shown out in the life.

CHAPTER XIX.

IN AMOY.

MRS. LEE became well known in the chapel at Amoy. One day a missionary asked whether she had any family. She told him about her family and about Chi Lap being in the city. The missionary said he would like to see her son.

Chi Lap appeared in the chapel soon after. It was not the first time he had gone there. He too was interested in Christianity, but afraid to let it be known lest it should injure his business. This time he happened to be in the chapel when his mother was there. After service she called him to the missionary and introduced him as her son. As no one but the missionary seemed to notice him, he remained, and the more he heard the more he wanted to hear.

This missionary had a little girl who was an invalid, and he needed some one to wait on her. Pleased with the boy, he offered to hire him. Chi Lap was earning money, but not rapidly; besides, he was not sure of making a living for the future at his business, as many other boys were engaged in it; so he was glad to accept an offer of regular wages and a home, but more still was he pleased to

be with the missionary where he might hear the gospel.

The missionaries had asked Mrs. Lee about Choh Lin too, and whether she wished to give him an education.

"Yes," said she, "I should be glad to have him learn, but cannot afford to pay what the teacher charges."

They told her of the mission-school where children were taught for nothing, and said that if Choh Lin really wanted to study, and she would bring him to Amoy, he might attend the school there. Though delighted with this offer, Mrs. Lee hardly knew how to have her two boys away while she remained at Tay Soa. After planning for a while, she decided to hire rooms at Amoy and live there herself with Choh Lin, and leave her mother-in-law and daughter at Tay Soa if unwilling to move to the city.

When she first told Choh Lin of her plan the boy was almost wild with joy. He could hardly wait to get ready for school. He cared not only for that and to be in the large city, but was pleased to think that he would be with the missionaries and could hear the gospel for himself. Had he had his own way, Choh Lin would have started for Amoy the next morning. He little thought that a boy might need better clothes for school, and would need more than one suit. He had had very little in the way of new clothing of late years.

Choh Lin's longing to become a learned man that he might be a rich one came back with double force now that he saw so good a chance to get an education. He was anxious to learn the truth and become a Christian, but did not think yet of using his learning for doing good with it. He wanted to be rich, that he might buy as many good things as he could use.

Choh Lin could talk of very little besides Amoy and the school. He asked his mother all kinds of questions, far more than she could have answered had she been at the school herself. She knew little about it—so little, indeed, that her answer usually was, "I don't know."

The grandmother was not pleased with the idea of Choh Lin going to the school of the foreign teachers, and would gladly have kept him at Tay Soa. Far rather would she have him grow up in ignorance than learn from people who believed a foreign religion. It was useless for her, however, to try to keep Choh Lin. She would have felt less troubled if her grandson had been going to live among heathen; but to be among Christians and away from her own influence, to be with his mother alone, who would do everything possible to make him an enemy of the gods and spirit-worship of China,—this was almost more than the old lady could endure. Mrs. Lee had urged her mother-in-law to go to Amoy, but in vain. She would not listen to such a proposal. She had lived at Tay

Soa so many years that she could not think of going away now. Probably she had a secret fear of meeting the missionaries, lest they should turn her, as they had done her daughter-in-law, away from the religion of China.

Those were long days to Choh Lin that came between the decision and the moving to Amoy; aside from the desire to see and live in a city, and the wish to be at school, was the anxiety to get away lest another famine should come, causing more suffering and starvation. But there was another feeling still that made him wish to leave: he had few friends now since he had become a worshiper of the true God, and he longed to be where people did not hate and persecute, and cry out, "There goes a foreigner's child."

He had heard his mother talk so much of the chapel and the people who gathered there to worship, of the singing, the prayers and the preaching, that he felt anxious to attend the chapel too. He was eager to meet the Christians, and most of all the missionaries, and to tell them that he also worshiped the true God.

At last the day for moving came. Not many boats were needed to bear their goods to Amoy. Two strong men could probably have carried all their furniture and everything. Mrs. Lee left most of her property at Tay Soa, intending to buy the few things needed when she reached Amoy.

It was a grand day to the country boy when he

reached the large city. He was delighted at the many sights before him. It seemed that he had not in all his life seen so many boats as lay at anchor or were sailing around in the harbor, and some of them were such immense vessels! The war-junks appeared to be awful, with their flags flying and the great cannon reaching their long necks and open mouths out toward him from the decks of the vessels. The merchant-junks, with high sterns and gaudy paintings, with carved work and horrid (though to him grand) pictures, were mighty vessels. As they lay at anchor, with their huge black eyes on either side of the bow looking out upon the water, they seemed to the boy as great giants who were merely resting before going out on the ocean to beat down the waves with their immense bulk. Farther away from the landing where the Tay Soa boats stopped lay the foreign-built ships. These, so far away, appeared to be wonderful giants with their tall masts and many crosstrees. More wonderful still was the great city, reaching about a mile along the harbor and stretching nearly as far back from the water. The crowds of vessels surprised him, the multitudes of houses astonished him, and the many new and strange sights kept him in a fever of excitement and wonder. He hardly listened to anything his mother said, and when the boat anchored and the time came to go ashore he was so interested in looking that he could scarcely think of stepping into the small boat.

At the landing they were met by Chi Lap. The older brother was pleased at the curiosity of Choh Lin, and proud to be able to tell him about the many new things that appeared; but he cautioned Choh Lin not to ask too loud nor seem to be too ignorant, lest the people find out that he was nothing but a country boy.

"'Nothing but a country boy'!" repeated the younger brother. "Certainly, I am a country boy, and I came from Tay Soa, a place that is as good as any in the Middle Kingdom."

"Shih! shih!" spoke Chi Lap in a low voice; "don't say anything about Tay Soa. It is a good place, but then it is not Amoy."

"Thung-a! ti thung-a! Ti but but! Ho chiah! Beh boe thung-a?" cried a boy as he came along with a tray or basket of sweetened fruits and candies. ("Sugared things! sweet sugared things! Sweet, very, very sweet! Good eating. Will you buy sugared things?") Seeing Choh Lin, he came to him and said, "Good young friend, here are just what you like, the sweetest kind of fruits and candies. Even the bright country does not have any as sweet and good. Will you buy? They are so cheap! I am really almost giving them away. These," holding up some, "are worth five cash—yes, ten cash—apiece, but I will sell them to you at a single cash each. You will never get any as cheap up in the country."

Choh Lin was ready at once to spend a few cash

to take advantage of such a bargain, but Chi Lap said quietly yet decidedly as he motioned Choh Lin not to buy, "Em boe" ("not buy"), and hurried his brother on.

"Why did not you let me buy?" asked the younger; "they were so cheap."

"'Cheap'!" repeated Chi Lap. "I used to sell those same things five for a cash. He saw that you were from the country, and thought that you did not know much. Be careful how you act and what you buy. Almost every one will charge you five times as much as a thing is worth if they see that you don't know."

The two boys were soon at Choh Lin's future home. It was very small, with only two little rooms, and very dark ones at that, but about as good as the homes of many poor people in the city. It took only a short time to get their household goods in order. Chi Lap, on account of his mother and brother moving to Amoy, had a holiday and spent it with them. As soon as the work was done the two brothers went out for a walk, Chi Lap intending to show Choh Lin the chapel, mission-house and school. It was Saturday, and there was no school, so the boys could go into the schoolroom without interfering with the scholars. Chi Lap got the key and showed his brother around. They met the missionary as they were going about, and Chi Lap at once introduced Choh Lin, who hardly knew what to say when addressed.

It is so common for the Chinese to greet one another with the questions, when they meet as strangers, "How old are you? and have you eaten yet?" that Choh Lin expected of course that the missionary would ask how old he was, so he answered as politely as he could, "Chap-jee hay" ("twelve years").

But the missionary had said he was glad to see him, and then asked when he and his mother came into the city. Choh Lin, a little too excited to notice the question, supposed that it was the regular one, and answered, "Chiah-pa" ("eaten enough").

The missionary smiled, and after a few pleasant words went on, leaving the two to look around farther.

Choh Lin felt troubled when his older brother told him what the missionary had asked, and wondered if he would think ill of the new scholar.

"Don't fear," said Chi Lap; "the missionaries are the kindest and best men in the world, and are the wisest too. They know almost everything. They even know what we mean when we tell them just the opposite. The other servants say that missionaries can see into our hearts and almost know what we think, only they can't always tell when people cheat them. They know everything about the badness of the heart except when it is shown in bargains."

Choh Lin was greatly pleased with his visit to the school. Chi Lap told him that as they would

be able to go to the chapel-service the next day, there would be no need now of visiting that room.

Choh Lin was with his mother in the chapel among the first at the morning worship. He took the hymn-book offered him, and was proud to let it be known that he knew quite a number of the characters (or words) in it. When the hymn was given out he could find it; nor was that very difficult, as there were only thirteen in the book. Thirteen hymns, however, were enough for Choh Lin. That first one was not sung as well as it would have been in a church in America, but far better than Choh Lin had ever heard singing. God accepted it as praise, no doubt, for it was sung heartily and the people meant what they sang. That singing was worship; Choh Lin came there to worship God, so he tried to join in the song. Softly and in a low tone he followed the others, readily catching the simple tune; each note seeming a step by which the boy's heart went up to God. Then the reading of the Bible was like opening the door to allow him to approach and listen to the Almighty, while the prayer appeared to be God coming out to listen while all united through the leader in talking to him.

The newness of the service attracted the boy, but the solemnity of the worship, and yet its simplicity, drew his heart out toward God. Choh Lin was not yet a heart-Christian, nor did he really know what it was to be one. He had only changed gods when

he gave up idolatry. He did not know about a change of heart, and about the need of the Holy Spirit to bring about that change; but the Spirit of God was leading him, though he did not know it.

That first Sabbath in Amoy was a happy day for the country boy. New things met him everywhere and pleased him, but nothing so pleased and satisfied him as the services in the chapel. These made this the best day he had ever seen. How glad he was that he had come to Amoy! But there was one thing that gave him trouble, and that was what he was asked and what he learned in the inquiry-meeting. So many things the missionary asked of which he had never thought, and many things also of which he had never heard, that the boy was amazed. He was sorry, too, to be obliged to answer again and again that he did not know. Each time, however, the missionary kindly explained the question and its answer. At the close of the meeting Choh Lin felt that there was something in the new religion that he had not learned—something deeper than he had yet felt; and the prayer that the missionary gave him—to pray that the Holy Spirit would show him his sin and lead him to Christ—he resolved to offer very often, and to keep praying until his heart was all clean and right before God. He longed to be able to read the Bible, that he might know more about the Saviour and how to please and serve God.

CHAPTER XX.

IN THE MISSION-SCHOOL.

EARLY on Monday morning Choh Lin was ready for school. Indeed, long before the time he wanted to start, but was told by his mother to wait. When permitted to go he started eagerly for the school, which was only a little distance away. He took no dinner-basket nor yet books. He could come home for dinner, and the books would be furnished by the school. His courage, however, oozed out at the ends of his fingers by the time he had reached the schoolroom. When he saw the strange faces and the wise-looking teacher he almost wished himself back at Tay Soa. Scholars and teacher were strangers to him. Fortunately, the missionary was there, and at once saw Choh Lin. He introduced the boy to the teacher, said a few kind words, and then left.

Choh Lin hardly knew where his tongue had gone when the teacher asked him questions, but succeeded in finding it before the teacher had waited too long for answers.

When the school was called to order a seat was given him, a chapter from the Bible read, a prayer

offered by the teacher, and the work of the day began. There was the same noisy study on the part of the boys, and some had the same lessons that he had heard recited at Tay Soa. But another book was studied, and that was the Bible. Each one was taught to read and commit it to memory. Choh Lin was glad to study the holy book. Not only did he study; he thought of what he learned, and many a passage was kept in mind to ask his mother about afterward. Besides the usual studies of the Chinese schools and the Bible the boys were taught something of geography and arithmetic: they were also taught a catechism of Bible truths; for this, while it was a school to fit the scholars for useful lives, was meant primarily to teach them of the Bible and the Saviour in the hope that they would become Christians.

Some of the boys studied just because they must, while others were anxious to learn all they could. Choh Lin set himself at once to study, because he meant to get the good of it in the future. The teacher noticed his studious habits and praised him for trying to do so well.

"Some day," said he, "you may be a learned man and a preacher of the gospel."

This was praise that Choh Lin did not care for. He did not wish to become a preacher; indeed, had not thought of it at all. Had the teacher said that some day he would become a graduate and a rich as well as great man, Choh Lin would have been far

more pleased. He, however, learned to like the quiet, kind and good teacher, and was ready to listen and take his advice. He did not understand how some boys could deceive the teacher as they did. When the teacher was not looking they began whispering or playing, but as soon as his eye was on them they pretended to be busy with their studies. It was strange to Choh Lin that boys in a school where they were taught of the true God and from the Bible should do this. He soon learned that not all boys who know about God serve him faithfully.

Choh Lin did not find the boys as friendly as he hoped. At recess, when all had an opportunity to talk, the others seemed to forget that a strange boy was among them. Some did come to him and ask where his home was, but when they learned that he was from a little village off in the country, they did not seem to care much more for him. None asked, as he hoped they would, whether or not he were a Christian, and none seemed to care much about anything but play. He gradually became acquainted with the boys, yet did not like them as much as he had hoped. They called him a country boy, and said that he was green; they ridiculed his country ways and made sport of many things he did.

City people in China think themselves brighter and better than those who live in the country. They speak of country people as green. Perhaps they are right, yet green things, unless painted, are live

things. The country is the place where good things grow, and were it not for the country city people would soon die. Country people can live without the city, but city people cannot live without the country.

For a while Choh Lin took their ridicule kindly, yet could not see why he was the worse for having lived in the country. He knew that inside of him he was as real a boy, and just as able to study or to work, as any city boy. He was right. It is not so much the place in which he lives that makes the boy as it is that which is in him. A diamond is no less a diamond because found in the sand of the river-bed, nor is a boy the less worthy because he happens to have had his home where there is an abundance of grass, trees and ground. If Choh Lin did not know as much of the city, he knew far more of the country than the boys who ridiculed him; and he was really wiser than those who had lived all their lives where there was little to be seen except stone pavements and brick-and-mortar walls.

"I may be green," said he one day when the boys were ridiculing him, "but I would rather be that than dry. Dry things are dead things. Dry weather brings drought and famine and starvation and death."

"You don't know anything," replied one of the boys, "and that is the reason we laugh."

"That may be," answered Choh Lin, "but I mean to learn. I do know one thing, and that is

that the great men of past ages say that we must not laugh at the mistakes of people, but help correct them."

"What do you know about the men of past ages?" asked a boy. "They died long before you were born."

"Men die, but their sayings live," replied Choh Lin; "so our teacher told us."

Not once, but often, did the others try to tease the country boy; usually he was too good-natured to become angry.

One of them asked him one day, "Is it true that the people at Tay Soa are so green that before they are allowed to come to the city the village elders order them to be put out in the sun for three or four days to dry?"

"Is it true," asked Choh Lin in reply, "that when city people go out into the country the mandarins are obliged to show them the cows, lest when they see them out in the fields they would think them lions and tigers and be frightened to death?"

"Why is it that you country people are so brown-skinned, and we of the city are so white?" asked one.

"I suppose it is for the same reason," replied Choh Lin, "that farmers hide their plants when first set out in the sun—because they are so weak."

"Do you think we city people are weaker than you in the country?" asked a boy indignantly.

"I only answered Kiong's question," replied Choh Lin quietly.

"If we are weak," spoke Kiong, "we are strong enough to buy all the good things and sell them for the benefit of the country people, who otherwise would have nothing but what they raise on the land."

"I can tell why country people are all brown," said another boy: "they are so homely that the sun is ashamed to see them, so it paints their faces brown, and some almost black."

"Perhaps that is the reason," replied Choh Lin, "yet the sun is willing to look into the faces of country people. But because the city people are so full of trickery and dishonesty he turns away from them and allows them to grow pale."

"We are no more dishonest in the city than you in the country," said the boy angrily. "You bring stale eggs to the city and sell them for fresh, and old fowls for young chickens. Then you fill their craws with wet sand, so that we buy a pound or two of sand for the same price that we pay for chicken-meat."

"I know that country people are not always honest," answered Choh Lin, "but they must cheat to try to keep near their city brothers. Yet it is too bad to see that the country people are falling so far behind that they are losing sight of their friends in the city. We cannot learn such things as quickly as you. Cheating is like fire: it goes slowly among green things, but eats up everything that is dry."

The first morning of school, when the teacher

prayed, Choh Lin at once bowed his head and put his hands before his face. The next morning, looking up a moment at the others before closing his eyes, he saw that some heads were not bowed. While there were not a few who sat with faces covered by their hands, others were looking around the room, and two or three were whispering. He did not know which was the right way for boys to act, nor did he dare ask. He wanted to worship as boys should, and, thinking over the matter for a while, determined to watch, and the boys that seemed to be the best he believed to be the ones who took the right way to pray. He soon learned that those who sat with bowed heads and listened to the teacher's prayer were the safe ones to follow.

He learned how to act not only during time of prayer, but at all times, and gradually his "greenness" passed away. But he did not lose the hearty good-nature and happy boyishness of the country, though he became as polished as any in the school. He was really polished: *soft* things may be made smooth, but it is the hard and the solid only that can be polished. Choh Lin had some of this hard grit in his character, and the teacher, as well as the missionaries, saw that he would not only bear polishing, but that it would be worth while to do it.

Gradually he won the respect of his teacher and the missionaries. While most of the boys learned to like him, others became jealous and tried to annoy

him long after the rest gave up teasing him about the country. These accused him of making presents to the teacher to win his favor. Choh Lin had made a short visit to Tay Soa after being some months in school, and brought several presents from the country for his friends and the teacher. In vain did Choh Lin deny that he had done this to gain favors from the teacher; it was enough for the few that he had given him presents. The boy said that it was their duty to show respect to their teacher, and that was all his present was meant for. The great difficulty with these boys was that they were too lazy to study, and did not like to hear Choh Lin praised for success and themselves blamed for not doing well. More than that, they did not like to see the missionaries take so much more notice of this country boy than of themselves. Their dislike in time became almost hate, and they were eager to find something against the boy.

One day, as he was coming out of the schoolroom, some one behind pushed him against another in front. That one, Kok, turned angrily and struck Choh Lin, saying as he did so, "You green country boy, cannot you come out of school without trying to push others over?"

The blow was so unexpected that Choh Lin, without taking time to think, struck back, and received a blow in return. This would have led to a fight had not the teacher heard the disturbance and come to the door. He was surprised to see his fa-

vorite pupil striking another, and sharply rebuked Choh Lin. Too much confused to reply, the boy walked away. This gave those unfriendly to him an opportunity to say unkind things for the teacher's ears.

Choh Lin saw that he had lost favor with the teacher, and feared that the missionaries, if they heard of the trouble, would send him away from school. He wanted to explain to his teacher and beg him not to tell the missionaries, but dared not. He resolved, however, that he would not strike any one again, no matter how great the provocation.

Some time after this the teacher's pen and also some papers from his desk were missing; among the papers was a record of misbehavior of some of the scholars. Choh Lin happened to be absent from the school the day that the loss was discovered. All the other scholars denied having been to the teacher's desk, and said that they had seen nothing of either pen or papers. The teacher determined to find out if any one had taken the pen and paper, and examined the desk of each boy. He found nothing of the missing record, but did find some of the paper and the pen at Choh Lin's place. The teacher was greatly troubled at this discovery, though he said very little about it to the scholars. They, however, had seen him take the pen and papers from Choh Lin's desk. The good man hardly knew whether to tell the missionaries or to wait and have a talk first with the boy. He waited un-

til the next day, determined to give Choh Lin a chance to explain before telling the missionaries.

Choh Lin was at school early the next day, and the teacher asked him about the pen and papers. When told where they had been found, the boy replied, "An enemy has done this. I have not taken the pen or the papers. Why should I? The missionaries are good to invite me to their school; should I repay them by stealing from the teacher they so kindly furnish, and who has himself been so kind to me? More than that, the Lord in the Ten Commandments says, 'Thou shalt not steal.' I am trying to obey and serve that Lord; why should I, then, prove myself so unfaithful to him?"

The honest look of the boy would have convinced almost any one but a Chinaman that Choh Lin was telling the truth. But the teacher was so used to the deceitful ways of his people, and knew so well how a look of honesty can be assumed by them, that he was not convinced of the boy's innocence. "We will see," he said. "It is almost time to begin school; we will talk of it some other time."

"Please do not tell the pastors," pleaded Choh Lin; "they will drive me from the school; then I must go back to my native village to live again among the heathen. There I cannot learn to read, nor are there any Christians with whom I may worship. There is no Sabbath there, no Bible, no God. Please don't send me back; I want to be a Christian. I did not steal."

The kind-hearted teacher was almost convinced of Choh Lin's honesty, and agreed to say nothing about the matter to the missionaries. Some of the scholars, knowing where the pen and papers had been found, were ready to believe Choh Lin a thief, though some insisted that his enemies had put the articles there, and they were ready to say who had done it, too.

A few days after this the chapel-keeper, who also took care of the schoolroom, overheard some boys say that Choh Lin had stolen the teacher's pen and some papers and hid them in the desk.

"What!" said he, "Choh Lin stolen pen and papers? That cannot be. He is an inquirer and don't steal." When told the whole story, the chapel-keeper, who was a great friend of Choh Lin, said, "I can tell all about that. I found some pieces of paper and a pen on the floor one night; the paper was by a mouse-hole; perhaps the mouse had carried the rest into his hole. I picked them up and put them by Choh Lin's seat. I saw that he had no pen, and thought if this were not his he would see that the owner got it. He is a boy whom we all can trust. You will find it out some day, too, and be sorry that you called him a thief now."

The chapel-keeper's explanation was given to the teacher and to the scholars, and Choh Lin was again in favor. Even those who did not like him could find nothing now to say against him. His kindness and readiness to help others gradually won almost

all of the scholars as his warm friends; and when they learned that his father had once been rich they were the more ready to respect and honor him. Yet a few of the boys watched him closely, not so much to find fault in him as to keep him from seeing and telling of their faults.

It has already been said that few vices are so common in China as gambling: boys as well as men are passionately fond of it. They are ready to try games of chance for almost anything. Some would probably even be willing to take a chance or two at a church fair if they lived in America. One day after school a boy appeared in the street with a quantity of preserved fruit. He had also a bamboo-cup, or tube made of bamboo-wood, open at one end, the other closed by the joint. In this cup were twenty or twenty-five small splints of bamboo, projecting out of the cup. These were numbered on the ends which were hidden. He invited the school-boys to try their fortune for some of his fruit. By paying a single cash, he said, they might get the value of five cash in fruit if they drew a lucky number from the cup. When the boys saw how much fruit might be got for one cash, several were eager to try. The owner, after shaking the cup with the splints, reached it out to the boy who gave him one cash. The boy drew one of the splints, but the number was a wrong one, and the owner of the fruit said, "You will have to try again; that didn't draw anything."

One of the other boys handed a cash, drew a stick, and the number proved to be the right one.

"Here are your fruits," said the owner, giving him five times as much as one cash could buy elsewhere.

The lucky purchaser, munching his fruit and looking disdainfully on the others who had not dared to venture, said, "See what I got for a single cash! You boys might have fruit in plenty if you were not afraid to try your luck."

His success induced others to try, and many cash slipped quickly into the pocket of the fruit-seller. While a few drew prizes, the most of the cash were given for nothing.

"Why don't you try it?" said Kok to Choh Lin. "Don't you like fruit?"

"Yes," replied he, "but I don't want to get it in that way."

"Why not?" was asked.

"Because it is gambling," answered Choh Lin.

"It isn't gambling," said one; "it is only buying fruit and taking the chances of getting it."

"It is gambling," spoke another, "and just the kind we school-boys are forbidden to engage in."

When the fruit-seller heard that they were school-boys belonging to the foreign school, he hurried away, lest the foreigners should complain to the mandarins of his keeping a fruit-gambling stand. He knew very well that it would take all of his gains to buy off the mandarins, who would be glad

enough to arrest a boy for promoting gambling. They would thus seem to be very active in having the laws respected; and yet those very mandarins would probably join in gambling with men if they could do it without being discovered.

The next day at school there was some talk among the boys about gambling for fruit. The teacher overheard this. At noon he called Choh Lin to him and asked, "Were any of you boys gambling yesterday?"

Choh Lin, unable to say no, unwilling to say yes, not caring to tell tales of the others, was silent. The teacher saw this silence, and understood it to mean not only the guilt of the other boys, but of Choh Lin.

"So you have been gambling?" said he. "Do you not know it is against the rules of the school, and that it is a sin against the Church and the law of God? You are an inquirer and wish to be a Christian. Don't think that you can be one and gamble too. The Bible says you cannot serve God and Mammon; and gambling is the worst kind of Mammon-worship."

"I have not gambled," replied the boy, "and do want to be a Christian; I am trying to be one and obey God."

"Who of the boys were gambling?" asked the teacher, "for I see that there has been gambling done."

Questioned closely, Choh Lin at last told about

the gambling, and he would not have been like the Chinese if he had steadily refused to tell who did try their chances.

That afternoon the teacher, after a serious talk about the crime and sin of gambling before the whole school, questioned the boys as to who had been engaged in it. He asked the guilty ones so closely that, though some denied and others confessed, all felt sure he knew who some of the guilty ones were, and some were certain that Choh Lin had told. The gamblers were punished, and they blamed Choh Lin for it. For a while this made him less popular, but the feeling wore away. Telling tales is not despised in China as it is with us. When the boys were told how the teacher had found out, some asked Choh Lin why he did not tell a falsehood about it; others said that he had done right; and there the matter ended.

CHAPTER XXI.

TRYING TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

WHEN in his native village Choh Lin thought himself a Christian. He had given up worshiping idols and the spirits of the dead, prayed to the God of the foreigners and kept the Sabbath day; so he thought himself as good a Christian as anybody. His mother had tried to teach him that he and all others are sinners, but since the Chinese language has no words that give the Bible idea of sin and sinners, the boy had very little notion of sin. He supposed that he had merely displeased the foreign God by choosing Chinese gods, and now that he had changed gods he thought all had been made right. Yet he did not feel satisfied. That first Sabbath in the mission-chapel had opened his eyes to many things of which he had never thought. He had been like one walking by the light of a lantern in a dark night, seeing a few things near, but only darkness beyond. Then the moon, rising, showed many other things, but all dimly. The teaching his mother had given was like the lantern-light, and that of the chapel was as moonlight. Choh Lin was beginning to see much, but dimly.

His mother had told him that there was only one God, and yet that there was a Father and a Son and a Holy Spirit. How there could be only one, and yet three, he did not understand. He had learned from her that God would not have any to worship him who served other gods. Yet he did not understand that God wanted not outward but heart worship. Mrs. Lee had told him that he must trust in Jesus, the Son of God, but Choh Lin could not understand this. His great need was to know himself—to know what a sinner he was and how helpless without an almighty Saviour. Not less did he need to know God, and that he is so pure and holy that he cannot accept the service of a sinner who does not approach him through Christ.

Choh Lin learned rapidly that first day in the chapel, but still more did he learn at the inquiry-meeting. He was beginning to see the darkness in which he had lived. Now the light came more and more brightly, and Choh Lin felt more and more thankful that he was allowed to see, and he was anxious to see more. His prayer that the Holy Spirit would show him his sins was answered, and what the language of his country failed to tell the Spirit made known to his heart. He began to see what sin is—how it blinds the eyes of the soul and hardens the heart and unfits it to enjoy good. He saw, too, how it stains the soul, so that it is unfit for God's company and service, and unfit to enjoy and unable to receive the blessings that God offers.

He saw that the sinful soul is not only bad, but a place in which bad things grow—that evil is constantly springing up there as weeds in a garden. He saw, too, what sin had done for him and made him do against God. When he thought of the many times he had offended God and done the things that even his own heart told him he ought not to do, he began to understand what a sinner he had been.

He did not long need to pray to be shown his sins. They arose all around him; quietly as fog appears, so they appeared. From fog they changed to clouds—black clouds, loaded with rain and wind and thunder. What if they should burst? In a moment they would overwhelm him. What should he do? where could he go? Helpless, he was almost hopeless. In fear and distress he prayed for mercy. He felt the need of a Saviour now, and an almighty one. Earnestly he prayed the prayer given by the missionary, to be shown Christ as his Saviour.

That prayer, too, was answered. It was daybreak now, and daylight came swiftly. Full light shone into the soul of the Chinese boy. The bright sun rose. Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, sent his glorious light into Choh Lin's soul, and, lo! the dark clouds of sin vanished. No thunder-peal nor lightning-flash nor storm was near; instead, all was peace and beauty. How happy Choh Lin was! He seemed in a new world. It was a new sun that

shone over head, and the clouds in the sky were more beautiful than he had ever seen them, while the gray rocks of the hills of Amoy appeared to be set in green and gold. The far-off hills were the same that he had often seen, but never had they been so beautiful. He could now sit by the hour and admire them. Now they were *God's* hills; those rocks were *God's* rocks; the clouds and sun were his too; and that God was his heavenly Father, the one who loved him—so loved him that he gave his only-begotten Son to die that he might live. How delightful the thought that the great God loved him and had forgiven his sins! More than that, God would take care of him always, and after a while take him to live in heaven.

Happy Choh Lin! He had found Christ, and his soul was full of joy. He had heard of the love of God from the first time his mother had been to the chapel, but not until now did he understand it. He had heard of men in China who had sold themselves to die that they might get money to support their families; he had heard of great men, too, who had given their lives for the good of the people; but that was unlike the love of God in Christ. Those men died for their own, for those who loved them, but Jesus died for his enemies. Those were only men; Jesus was God. They died, and then did no more; Jesus died, but that was only the beginning of what he did. He was always trying to save men. He seemed never to grow weary of

waiting and trying to save. It was a new story of love, a wonderful story, and never grew old.

Choh Lin wondered that others did not love to listen to it, nor could he understand how the people could hear it again and again and yet not care about the Saviour. He did not think that the Holy Spirit had made him see his need, and then had led him to Christ, and was now making him see so much to love in the Saviour. People who see nothing in Jesus to love often wonder why Christians think so much of him. This is not because Christians are blinded, but because others are. God's people never see anything in Jesus that is not there, but others fail to know and love Christ because they are blind and their hearts are closed to him. A blind man cannot see beauties, no matter how plain they are; but if he does not see them, that is no proof that the beauties do not exist; it only proves him blind. We pass by strangers every day without a thought of love, yet when we become acquainted with those same strangers we may love them with all our hearts. So people are blind to Christ's beauty because to them he is a stranger. When the Holy Spirit opens their eyes and makes them acquainted with Christ, then they love him as they can love no other being.

Choh Lin had now found Christ, but did not know what difficulties a Christian must meet. When persecuted in Tay Soa for being a worshiper of the foreigners' God, he longed to be among Chris-

tians. But he did not find everything as pleasant at Amoy as he had hoped. He meant to live a good life, but found that there are other things than outside persecutions to hinder. In school were many little trials hard to bear; so even in his home and among his best friends he found troubles. Nor were his troubles all from without. His heart had them. They seemed to live and grow and multiply there. After he learned in the inquiry-meetings what he needed, he thought that as soon as he found the Saviour all his troubles would end. Now that he had found Christ, he was perplexed to know that the difficulties in the way of living a Christian life did not disappear. While he had little difficulty with his studies, he had all the more with the other pupils of the school.

Then there were troubles in the street. Boys called him a green country boy, a foreigner's child, and said that he was obliged to leave his native village because the people would not have foreigners' children there. It is true that this kind of persecution did not last, but there was a trouble that did not end, and that was in his own heart. Evil thoughts arose; they came just when he least expected them. Poor Choh Lin! He began to believe himself a hypocrite. He became at times wretched, nor did he know what to do. Again the evil thoughts left him, and for a while everything went well—so well that he became proud of himself. He felt that he was becoming very good,

better than other Christians. Suddenly there would come a change. Before he had time to see his danger he was guilty of some sin, and then was as wretched as he had been proud before.

Choh Lin learned before long that his own evil heart, aided by Satan, was the cause of much of this difficulty. When he learned how Paul was tried by the "law in his members" warring against "the law in his mind," so that he could not do the things he would, he learned to be more on his guard. Knowing now the danger, he escaped it far oftener than before. Although Choh Lin did not always do the best he knew, yet he did try to do right, and tried hard. Sometimes his evil nature got the better of him, and then came sad times of repenting. However, he gained in the resistance to evil habits and temptations. He was regularly at the inquiry-meetings, and his answers to the questions of the missionaries showed that he was gaining in knowledge. The missionaries did not yet admit him to the membership of the Church; they did not feel sure that he was a Christian, and thought it safer to allow him to wait than to have him become a member too soon. The Chinese inquirers learn so soon to repeat from memory the answers to the questions at the inquiry-meetings that the missionaries are often uncertain whether or not they have become true Christians, and therefore postpone admitting them to the full communion of the Church. This practice of deferring admittance to church-membership has

proved to be a wise one. The missionaries have continued it only in cases where it seems best. But these inquirers are not regarded as outside of the Church family; instead, they are at once taken into many of its privileges and receive special care and training.

When his mother was received Choh Lin also wished to join the Church; yet, believing that the missionaries knew best, he waited patiently. At last the time came when he was to be received into the communion of the Church. It was a happy day to the young Christian. He could now stand before all the world as a follower of Christ. Not without prayer and a deep feeling of unworthiness did he come before the officers of the Church for the final examination, and then seat himself among the members to partake of the bread and wine. How earnestly he listened to every word of the missionary! How full of meaning to him was that communion service! He saw his Saviour in and through the whole service; it seemed as if Jesus were really there and saying to him, "This is my body broken for you. This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." The soul of Choh Lin was communing with Jesus, and he enjoyed a feast. As he went away it was not to leave the communion behind him; by it he had been drawn nearer the Saviour.

If he had before been careful not to do anything wrong, lest he be kept out of the Church, he was

even more careful now lest he dishonor the Church and his Saviour. That he did nothing wrong none will suppose—he certainly did fail to do right many times—but on the whole he lived a Christian life. He was one of the youngest, if not the very youngest, member of the Church, being only fifteen years old, and because of his youth was the more closely watched by Christians, with a desire to help him; and he was as closely watched by the heathen, with a desire to hinder him. His schoolfellows were ready to notice any wrong he might do and report it to others. He had not an easy life, yet found a strong Arm to help him do right, and a loving Saviour to pity and pardon when he did wrong.

There came to Choh Lin a trial that he hoped had been left at Tay Soa. He suffered want. His mother, who had been able to support one family at Tay Soa from her business, was not able to support two, even though containing only the same persons. It cost more to live at Amoy; she had the rent to pay, besides, in the city, and Choh Lin was unable to help by hunting fuel or food. Mrs. Lee, rather than let her mother-in-law suffer, often went without food herself. Choh Lin's wants were cared for as well as she was able, but he was hungry many a time. Sometimes he wondered why the Lord did not send them food as he did to Elijah, or make an abundance of a little as Christ did: but, again, he felt that when the Lord was ready their wants would be supplied.

Chi Lap helped his mother and brother a little in their time of need. His wages in the mission family were more than he needed to supply his wants, and he gladly gave them all he could spare. He did not remain long in the mission family. A merchant offered him much larger wages, and he accepted the position after talking the matter over with the missionary. He now hired a small house on the island of Ko-long-su, opposite and near Amoy, where he, his mother and brother lived in comfort. Choh Lin now could see that God had only tried their faith, and felt that he could not be thankful enough for prosperity.

CHAPTER XXII.

BUSINESS OFFERS.

DURING their time of poverty in Amoy, Choh Lin continued at school. At times he talked to his mother and brother of trying to earn a living, but they urged him to keep at school, promising to do their part now in supporting him, and saying that when he became learned his turn would come to help them. So anxious was Mrs. Lee that he should continue studying that she would have starved herself rather than see him go into business. She had a purpose in all this, though she kept it hidden. She wished to see her youngest son a learned man, not that he might become an honored scholar, but that he might preach the gospel that had brought light and gladness to her dark soul. For this she hoped and prayed, and for this she was ready to make any sacrifice.

Choh Lin liked to study, nor had he lost the desire of being learned that he might become rich; but there had arisen in his heart another desire: it was to be learned that he might do good. The love of Christ was gradually conquering all other love, and making the young Christian think more of

others than of self. But if any thoughts of becoming a regular preacher of the gospel entered the mind of Choh Lin, they did not stay there long at a time.

Though living on the island of Ko-long-su and going to and from school, he saw much of the city and people of Amoy and learned much about the foreign merchants there. He saw Chi Lap in the employ of one and making money rapidly, and could not help wishing to be in the employ of foreigners too. Chi Lap was soon promoted, and had an increase of salary. When he talked to his younger brother of money-making, Choh Lin could not keep down the longing to be in business. He had already far more education than his older brother, and could not help thinking that he might soon receive a larger salary than Chi Lap. About this time one of the missionaries offered Choh Lin a place in his family as servant at good wages. The boy wanted to accept at once, but there arose in his heart the feeling that if he did he would not be able to do so much good as he might by continuing at school. This, together with the urging of his mother and brother that he stay at school, made him refuse the offer.

Not long after a foreign physician in Amoy, who had noticed the bright boy, offered him a place not only as errand-boy, but as an assistant in his office. The doctor told him that he would pay good wages, far more than he could earn at other work. When

Choh Lin seemed unwilling to accept, the doctor offered him twenty dollars a month as salary. Twenty dollars a month! This was more money than the boy had ever owned at one time, and far more than he dared hope to earn for years to come. He could hardly believe his ears, and asked again.

"Yes, I will give you twenty dollars a month," said the doctor. "That is more than six times as much as a workingman can earn; and I will give you that to begin with; then as soon as you learn the business I will increase the salary. You are just the kind of boy I want. Some day you may become a foreign doctor yourself, and then you can make your fortune."

Choh Lin could hardly give any answer. The offer was so large that it seemed impossible to believe it real. The doctor, however, convinced him that he was in earnest, yet gave the boy time to think of it and to consult the missionaries about it.

As money in China will buy about twelve times as much as in America, this offer was equal to nearly three thousand dollars a year here. It was a great temptation to a boy who had lived in poverty and almost starved for lack of money to buy food. Eagerly he hastened home to tell of the wonderful offer, expecting, of course, that his mother and brother would urge his acceptance.

Chi Lap was pleased and proud of his younger brother, yet could not help showing his disappoint-

ment as he said, "Of course the little brother must accept. There is a fortune in it. Such offers do not come often; yet I wanted to see him a learned man first."

"I do not see why he should accept," said Mrs. Lee. "You are earning enough to support us all now; we have enough to eat and drink and wear. I do not wish to see Choh Lin go into business yet. Let him wait until he has been longer at school."

"Mother, I have been a long time at school, and can read and write well; why should I not begin now to earn money? You and Chi Lap have taken care of me so long that it is time for me to earn something. I may never get so good an offer again." So spoke Choh Lin as he wistfully looked from Chi Lap to his mother.

"There is a better offer waiting your answer," replied the mother.

"A better offer! What is it?" inquired Choh Lin eagerly. "I have heard of nothing else."

"It is this," replied Mrs. Lee, slowly quoting from the Bible as well as she could remember: "'There is no man that shall leave house and land and father and mother, for my sake and the kingdom of heaven, who shall not receive in this life a hundred-fold more, and in the world to come life everlasting.' There," continued she, "is the offer of our Lord to you, Choh Lin. It has been waiting for you to accept. It is a great deal larger than that of the physician. Which will you take?"

Suddenly a glimpse of the meaning of his mother flashed on the boy's mind, and he asked, "Do you mean that I must give up this good offer for Christ's sake, mother?"

"Yes," was the reply.

"But how must I do it for him? Cannot I serve him as well in the doctor's office as in any other way? Besides, shall I not have plenty of money with which to do good?"

"You cannot preach the gospel in the doctor's office."

"Preach the gospel!" spoke Choh Lin in surprise. "How did you know that I thought of becoming a preacher?"

"I did not know it, but, my boy"—here the mother's voice trembled—"I have prayed that you might become a preacher. For that I have hoped and struggled—yes, and have starved myself too—that you might keep at school to prepare for that work. The Lord has been very good. He has spared both of my boys to me; he has sent the teachers to tell me of the life-giving God and of a Saviour; and I have wanted to give one of my boys back to his service. The Lord has done so much for us that I hoped we could spare one of our family for his service, to prove that we are willing to do something for his cause."

"Do you mean that Choh Lin is to become a preacher?" asked Chi Lap.

"Yes; I have hoped and prayed that he may,"

was the mother's answer. "We have found the Saviour, and it seems but just to our people that we should do something to tell them of a Saviour too."

"But I can give money to educate and support another preacher," replied Choh Lin.

"Where is the man?" asked Mrs. Lee. "While we are waiting to find him many may perish without hearing of the Saviour; but Choh Lin might tell them. Yes, he might, only he wished to earn money. While he was earning money the souls were lost. 'What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?'"

Choh Lin was silent, and Mrs. Lee, after a few moments' waiting, continued: "Wait, my son; don't decide just yet. Think a while of what the Saviour did for you, and ask what he would have you do for him. Pray to be shown the way. It may be that I am wrong; the Lord knows best what you can do for him. Look to him, and he will show the way. Whatever you do, first ask the missionaries about it."

His mother's talk was so earnest that Choh Lin could not help thinking of what she said. He prayed as well as thought over the offer; he asked the missionaries, too, but he asked with such an uncertain tone, as if himself half decided to continue at school, that they at once advised him to go on with his studies.

Hardly daring to go against his mother's earnest

wish, and more than half convinced that she was right, Choh Lin decided to decline the offer of the doctor. At times afterward he felt that he had done right, and at others felt sorry that he had refused so good an opportunity. He did not yet see clearly his duty to preach the gospel; rather, he could not at once give up the idea of becoming a rich man. The spirit of self-denial for Christ was gradually taking possession of his heart.

This was not the only offer that Choh Lin had. He was becoming well known and quite a favorite among the foreigners. Since his brother proved so good a business-man they thought that the younger brother would be likely to be equally good. Foreigners were making money very rapidly then, and were willing to pay large salaries to Chinamen whom they could trust. The fact that Choh Lin was in the mission-school and had been much with foreigners, and thus had learned their ways, made him the more desirable. Then he was a Christian and an honest boy or young man; that made him worth more than twice the amount many foreigners were willing to pay to a heathen. So much better and more trusty are the Christian than the heathen Chinese that it was not an uncommon thing when the writer lived in China for heathen to steal certificates of character of Christians and use them as an almost sure way of getting employment.

A most tempting offer came to Choh Lin from a foreign merchant some time after that of the doctor

had been refused. A merchant in Amoy who knew the young student well, wanted to start a branch of his business in the island of Formosa, and looked around for a trusty Chinaman to put at the head of it. One day he invited Choh Lin to his office and offered him a position as clerk at a salary of fifty dollars a month. After he became sufficiently acquainted with the business, the merchant said, he wanted him to start a branch of it in Formosa and take a share in the profits in addition to his salary.

This was an offer that few Chinamen, even in those days of large salaries, received. To us the offer may not seem a large one, but, remembering the value of money in China, the offer was equal to six thousand dollars a year here. Such a salary, for a schoolboy not yet eighteen years old, was a very large one.

No wonder that Choh Lin was compelled to pray long and earnestly before he could decide to reject this opportunity. He had, however, been led to think more of preaching the gospel since he had declined the doctor's offer. When he told the missionaries of these opportunities, they could not ask him to refuse. They wished him to study for the ministry, but could not urge him to decline so tempting an offer. They told him that he must do as he thought best, but urged him not to think alone of *money*. They spoke of the need of preachers, and told him of the Lord's reward to his faithful servants. They said also that they wished him to study, and would

be very glad if he decided to give his life to the ministry. They said that they could never afford to give one-fifth part as much money as the merchant promised, yet they would give him enough, when a preacher, to provide for his wants; and, further, if he should decide to become a preacher, they would allow him money enough now to defray his necessary expenses. They made no tempting offers, but merely said that the Lord would reward him in the end if he gave up anything for the Lord's sake.

"How much do you allow young men while studying, and how much after they become preachers?" asked Choh Lin.

"We will allow you two dollars and a half a month while studying," was the answer, "and when you preach the allowance will depend on your expenses—from four to eight dollars a month. But we do not wish you to preach for the sake of making money. If that be your object, we do not want you at all. We only want those who are anxious to save their countrymen, and who are willing to make sacrifices for Christ. We do not pay preachers for their work and sacrifice; the Lord does that when the work is done. We only keep them from want while at work. Souls are worth a sacrifice. Has not our Saviour done enough to make us willing to do a great deal for him and for the souls he loves and died to save?"

After talking the matter over further, the mis-

sionaries advised Choh Lin to think and pray over the offer of the merchant, and to think and pray as earnestly over his duty, before deciding to accept or decline the opportunity for business.

Had the offer been made a few months earlier, it would have been accepted, but now Choh Lin hesitated. He was much better able now to think of the ministry than he had been then. He had been growing in a spirit of self-denial; he had also learned more of the love of Jesus, and had given himself more fully to the Saviour; in short, he lived nearer the cross than he had done, and was better able to think of his duty to Christ and to his fellow-men. Dollars did not seem to him quite as large now as before: the more he thought of Christ and of souls the smaller did money seem in comparison.

When alone, Choh Lin weighed the two offers—the one of the merchant and the other of the missionaries. Here was an offer of fifty dollars a month now, and soon to be increased; and in a few years he would be a rich man. He would be able to live well and would be honored by all.

On the other hand was the offer of two dollars and a half a month, or just one-twentieth of the merchant's offer. It is true the two dollars and a half might be increased to four, or even eight, possibly to ten, dollars in a few years, but he could never expect to receive more. So, at the very most, being a preacher, he could not expect to receive,

after years of preparation, more than one-fifth of what he was offered *now* by the merchant.

Then the work. He would as a merchant's clerk, and soon as overseer of the business, have regular hours for work, and when they were over he would have nothing to do; he might rest and do as he chose. As a preacher his work would never be done; day and night he must be burdened with care and anxiety as well as work. He must economize in every possible way—live in any house, no matter how poor, that the mission was able to provide for him. More than that, he must go wherever he might be sent, live among strangers, and probably have no permanent home. As a merchant he would have a comfortable home, enjoy all luxuries and be almost entirely his own master. Then, too, if a merchant, he would be respected by everybody, but as a preacher he would be despised by his people as trying to overthrow the religion of his fathers and set up instead that of the hated foreigners. He would be mocked, insulted, abused, and possibly killed, for preaching a foreign religion.

Thus did Choh Lin look at the two offers, but did not stop there. There came second thoughts. "True," said he to himself, "I will be honored, have an easy life and become rich; but I must die some day. What then? What good will honor, luxury and wealth do me when I am dead? Then I must meet the souls of my countrymen whom for a fortune I now propose to neglect. I will have

gained the fortune only to lose it then, and will neglect the souls now to lose them then too. I must meet the Saviour who gave himself for me, and I must meet him empty-handed. I will have nothing to show for my life. Then I will see that all the honors and rewards of an eternity have been given for a little ease, a little honor, a few thousand dollars, during the short life of earth. If I become a preacher I must remain poor and unhonored, perhaps despised; my life will be a hard one, but it will soon end. Then what? No more poverty or toil or disgrace. Then will begin riches, reward, rest, glory. Then Jesus will say, 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these, ye did it to me.' Then he will say, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; be thou ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' And all this for eternity, never to end! Can it be that I ever thought of entering man's service when God wanted me?—of looking for dollars as my pay when God offers immortal souls?—of giving all my life for time when an eternity is waiting for it? Have I been so blinded? Do I know so little of Jesus, so little of the true Christian life? I begin to see and know —yes, and mean to begin to do too. No, I will not be a merchant. Dollars cannot buy me. I belong not to this world, but to eternity, and for that I will live. Yes, I will be a preacher."

When Choh Lin made known his decision, all his friends except the missionaries and his mother

thought him foolish. They tried to persuade him to accept the merchant's offer, but in vain. He said little in reply, but quietly told the merchant that he could not accept, and the missionaries that he was ready to begin his study for the ministry.

When Choh Lin declined the offer the merchant made it to Chi Lap. It was at once accepted, and the older brother was on the road to riches. After learning the business of the merchant in Amoy, Chi Lap was sent to Formosa. There he rapidly rose in honor. He proved himself an excellent business-man, and not only made money for his employer, but became rich himself. Before he was thirty years of age Chi Lap was regarded as a rich man. But riches proved dangerous. Wealth led him into sin. He was disciplined by the Church for wrong-doing, and seemed almost an outcast from his Christian brethren. For years he lived away from the Church and, it is to be feared, away from God. Disease slowly weakened his strength and misfortune gradually diminished his riches. It is true, he repented of his folly and became a penitent and, we trust, a faithful Christian, but too late to remedy the evil of his life. Saddened, disappointed and amid the shadows of dishonor through his unfaithful life, he sank into the grave. For ten years he had enjoyed his riches, but before he was forty years of age he left a half-wasted fortune, a dishonored life, to tell of the failure he had made.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A NEW RELATIVE.

WE go back in our story to the rebellion in Amoy, to tell of a man who may already be known to some of Choh Lin's friends.

When the imperial army encamped north of Amoy, the people in a small village near became frightened, and, leaving their homes, sought refuge in the city. Some of these found their way to the mission-chapel and there became acquainted with the missionaries. The strangers received so kindly a welcome that they looked upon the foreigners as true friends, and at once were ready to listen to what they had to say. The gospel was something new and pleased them; but when they learned that the object of the missionaries was to persuade people to give up the worship of the gods, and especially of the spirits of the dead, they were less attentive. Some of them, however, had become too much interested to stay away from the chapel. Among these was a young man named Jap Han Chiong. He was a bright, active, though quiet and modest young man, and greatly respected by the people of his village.

When peace was restored in the city the strangers were anxious to return to their home. Before starting they sent Han Chiong to the mandarins to ask if it would be safe to go back. The Rev. Dr. Talmage of the American mission, who had won the confidence of the refugees, was asked to accompany the young man. The two were politely received by the government officers, but were told that as it was uncertain what the rebels would do, it would be better for the strangers to remain a while longer in Amoy.

When Dr. Talmage and Han Chiong came back, old Mr. Jap showed great pleasure at the interest the foreigners had taken in himself and friends, and spoke to the missionary about the Christian religion. He said it was good, and just the religion for the young people of China. He even asked Dr. Talmage to make a Christian of Han Chiong.

Day after day the old man's interest in the foreigners and their religion deepened, and he wished that his son might become a Christian. In one of his talks with the missionaries about Han Chiong the question was asked of Mr. Jap, "Why do not *you* become a Christian? If these doctrines are so good for your son, why should not they be good for his father?"

"They are good, very good," replied the old man, "but I am too old to accept them now. When a man is seventy years of age it is time for him to think of the spirit-world and the pres-

ence of his fathers there, but not to change his religion."

When told that he was not too old to seek the true God and give himself to the Saviour, he continued, "It is too late for me now to begin to serve the foreign God. My feet have so long trodden in the old that they cannot now begin to walk in the new path. But the feet of Han Chiong are not yet hardened by the long walk; let him turn to the new path. It will be easy for him to walk in the new way. It is the best way. Had I known of it earlier I would be far along in the path, but it is too late now. My sun is near the western mountains; if I change from one to the other way now, the sun may set before I have learned the new road. If the darkness should come upon me when in neither way, what could I do? There would be no hope, no place for my spirit."

Though unwilling to change his religion, yet Mr. Jap was regularly at the chapel-service. He cared less and less for superstitious customs and idol-worship, and, though unwilling to own it, he was slowly giving up all for Christ. Before he went back to his village he was an inquirer after the truth, and when he left Amoy for his home he left it determined to be a Christian. His wife, who was also old, was nearly as much interested as he in Christianity, and some time after they reached the village they both were received into the Church, and with others became the first members of what

is now the Chinese Christian church of O Kang. Old Mr. Jap lived to the very unusual age in China of ninety years, and the last twenty were spent in the service of Jesus.

Han Chiong was more ready to listen to his father's advice than Mr. Jap supposed. From the first he was interested in the gospel and anxious to learn about Christianity. He gradually let it be known that he too was ready to give up the old for the new religion; and when his father and mother became members of the Church their son was with them.

Han Chiong was too active and able a man to remain long hidden in his native village. Not a great while after he left Amoy he returned to the city to engage in business there. He at once joined himself to the Christians, and became known as one of the most active and faithful of all.

A few years after he moved to Amoy, the church founded there by the American missionaries, one of the first organized churches in China, had grown so large that it was thought best to divide it, and the second church was formed. Han Chiong was chosen an elder in this organization. Not long after the new church was formed the native Christians of the two churches, advised by the missionaries, came to the decision that they were able to support pastors of their own. Often was the matter talked of and prayed over, and the way seemed clear for the churches to move forward; but the question was,

Who shall be chosen as pastors? There was not a native Christian in or around Amoy fitted for the office. It was finally decided that the members of each church should meet and choose pastors from the native Christians, and then have these men study with the missionaries until fitted to become regular ministers.

The meetings were solemn ones. The members felt that it was a very serious undertaking to choose men all untried to become their spiritual guides. Not less anxious were the missionaries that this first effort of the Chinese Christian Church to take care of itself should start successfully, but more anxious were they that the guiding hand of God should be plainly seen in the new undertaking.

"Whom shall we choose?" was often and anxiously asked, and gradually the answer came to one after another. When the meetings were held the anxious prayers and earnest looks told more of the interest all had in the result than the uncertainty about the men to be chosen. When the vote was taken, Mr. Lo, an elder and one of the best men of the first church, was chosen as its pastor, and Jap Han Chiong was chosen to become pastor of the second church.

Both men felt unfit for the work to which they were called, but, like true men and faithful Christians, said that they would do the best they could in the office to which the Lord seemed through his Church to call them.

The two began at once to study for the ministry, and were in a few years ordained and installed pastors of the churches that had called them. After some years of devoted work Pastor Lo was called home to enjoy the rest and reward that the Lord gives his faithful servants. Pastor Jap, as Han Chiong is now called, still remains, after more than twenty years of faithful, successful service, the loved and honored pastor of the second church of Amoy. He was probably the first ordained native pastor in China, and thus is the oldest pastor, though not the oldest man, among the many pastors of China. For twenty years has Han Chiong proved that a Chinaman can win and hold the love of a Christian people, hold the respect and confidence of unbelieving as well as Christian foreigners, and live a blessing to the church that loves to call him pastor.

Again we go back in the story. After Mrs. Lee moved to Amoy she learned that her mother-in-law was trying to bring about a marriage between Choh Lin's sister and a young man in the country. The old lady felt much troubled that at least one of her grandsons and her daughter-in-law had deserted the religion of their fathers, and determined, if possible, to keep the granddaughter from going the same way. She did not know that her granddaughter was already trying to live a Christian life. Being a young woman now, according to Chinese custom she could not go to the temple nor to any idolatrous gatherings, and she always excused herself from the

idolatrous practices that could be attended to in the house. She did not hide from the old lady her wish to be a Christian, but as anything said in favor of the foreign religion only caused an outburst of anger, the girl soon learned to say little about it.

The grandmother felt sure that only one thing was needed to draw the young woman back to idolatry, and that was to marry her into a heathen family. So every effort was put forth to bring about an engagement. The people of Tay Soa were ready and willing to help the old lady, and urged that it was time the young woman were engaged. Very many girls were married much younger than she, and for the grandmother to wait until the mother was ready to make a suitable match for her daughter was unwise. She was so bound up with the foreign religion that she would hardly give her daughter's interest a thought.

A suitable man having been recommended, the old lady, without letting Choh Lin's mother know, began bargaining at once for the marriage of the young girl. News fortunately reached Mrs. Lee at Amoy in time, and she hastened to Tay Soa, and at once put a stop to the proposed engagement.

Not long after it was told the mother that old Mrs. Lee was again trying to marry the girl to another young man. This, too, was prevented, but Mrs. Lee felt that her mother-in-law was not entirely in the wrong. It was time that a husband were found for the daughter, and if the mother and

brothers did not attend to it, the grandmother must. More than this, Mrs. Lee knew that as soon as the engagement was made the grandmother could do nothing more to prevent it. An engagement in China is almost as binding as marriage itself; indeed, in some cases more so. A husband for not a very good reason may be divorced from his wife, but an engaged man must have a good cause for refusing to marry the woman to whom he is engaged. The woman has little choice or power in either case.

Mrs. Lee determined to select a husband for her daughter, but she could not so easily decide on the man. She would not marry her to a heathen, nor did she wish an ordinary workingman, even though a Christian, if a better one could be obtained. Christian men of any kind were not plenty, and of those not married there were very few. Fortunately for her, young Mr. Jap was not only unmarried, but not even engaged.

This was not so strange, as China has any quantity of young and old bachelors, though it is a rare thing to find a woman over twenty who has never been married or engaged. For this there are two reasons: many Chinamen have more than one wife, and there are not as many women as men in that country. While no doubt as many girls as boys are born, the cruel custom of killing many of the infant girls has not yet been abolished.

Han Chiong was the man Mrs. Lee chose, but the question was not yet settled. Would he choose

the same way? Of course he could not call to see young Miss Lee, nor even see a photograph of her, but some one might tell him about her and learn his opinion. Like most men in China, Han Chiong wished a wife if able to pay for a good one. He was told that Miss Lee was a good and desirable young woman, and that her mother would not expect much money in return. Gradually the bargain was made, and it was at last fully settled that Choh Lin and Han Chiong were to be brothers-in-law.

None were more pleased with this than Choh Lin and Chi Lap, while old Mrs. Lee was as angry as the boys were pleased. Yet she could do nothing to prevent the engagement and marriage. Mothers have more authority than grandmothers over their own children, and the old lady could only grumble and show her displeasure by angry words and sour looks.

Mrs. Lee was anxious to have the wedding take place as soon as possible, in order that she might induce her mother-in-law to move to the city. Business was so poor that she was unable to support two separate families from her scanty income, and she urged the grandmother to come to Amoy. Old Mrs. Lee refused. She was angry that her daughter-in-law had led the whole family from the religion of China, and was unwilling to do anything to please her; but, more than this, she was afraid that by going to Amoy she would in some way come in contact with Christianity and be unable to resist its

power. The only way of safety was to remain away from Amoy and from Christian influence. While her hatred to Christianity did not lessen, her outspoken opposition to it greatly decreased. She could not help seeing that its influence on her daughter-in-law and grandchildren made them more kind to her; yet the old feeling against them for deserting the religion of their fathers remained. After a time she acted as though willing that they should be Christians if she were allowed to retain her religion. Though Mrs. Lee failed to induce her mother-in-law to move to Amoy, another influence brought about the desired result.

There had been trouble for a long time between the people of Tay Soa and those of a few villages some distance away. For perhaps a hundred years this trouble had been handed down from father to son, sometimes quiet and slumbering, and again breaking out into active enmity, terminating in battles and bloodshed. About the time that Mrs. Lee effected the engagement of her daughter there were signs of this trouble being aroused again, and rumors reached Tay Soa of a purposed attack on it. The old lady now began to listen with more willingness to suggestions for her removing to Amoy. When it became quite probable that Tay Soa would be attacked she consented to go to the city. She had seen some of these fights, and dreaded seeing another. She even urged her daughter-in-law to hasten the arrangements for moving, and only felt

content when she saw Tay Soa in the distance over the stern of the vessel that was taking her to Amoy. No one was more happy than Choh Lin to have his grandmother and sister with him. Now, as the family were together, it seemed that he had all he could wish.

But there came a break in this ceaseless flow of joy. The time for his sister's wedding came all too soon for him, and far too soon to please the grandmother. It greatly grieved old Mrs. Lee to see that the old heathen wedding-ceremonies were given up for the simple ones of the Christian Church. The missionaries, however, had not advised changing the customs that had nothing to do with idolatry and worship of the spirits, and the grandmother consoled herself with the parts that were left, and hoped that some day the people would see the need of bringing back the rest.

Young Mrs. Jap went at once to live with her husband, and Choh Lin found that he had two homes again. Between him and his brother-in-law there arose a friendship that increased with years, and that will last as long as the love of eternity endures.

CHAPTER XXIV.

BECOMING A PREACHER.

CHOH LIN, having decided to continue his studies, gave himself little further thought about business. He had occasionally visited his old home, and now made another visit before beginning to study in earnest. Since he had become a student and dressed better and came from the large city, he was treated with more respect than when he lived at Tay Soa. People had heard of his success in his studies, and also of the business offers he had received. Old friends congratulated him on his splendid prospects.

"Five hundred dollars a month," said an old man to him, "and then in a few years to be mandarin in Formosa! What an offer! You'll be rich in two years—yes, rich in a month! If I had five hundred dollars I would be rich now. How can it be possible?"

"Not five hundred dollars a month, Uncle Ton," replied Choh Lin, laughing, "but fifty."

"Oh, I heard it was five hundred," spoke the old man. "No matter; fifty dollars a month is a great sum of money. We think it a large sum here for

a man to earn by a year of work. But then to be mandarin in Formosa! That is wonderful! You will be able to gain many thousand dollars by that office."

"'Mandarin of Formosa'?" said Choh Lin in surprise. "What do you mean?"

"Are you not to be a mandarin there in a few years?" asked the old man. "Was not that promised too?"

"'Mandarin'?" repeated Choh Lin; then, as the truth came to him, he said, "Oh, it was not to be mandarin, but to take charge of business there, that I received an offer."

"Well, how did you get the offer?" inquired the old friend.

"Through the foreigners."

"I knew you would not lose by attending the foreign schools and caring for the foreign religion. It was wrong to harm you and your mother for worshiping the foreign God. If people can make money by serving another god, why should they not do it? When you are rich, Choh Lin, don't forget your old friends in Tay Soa."

"Perhaps I'll never be rich," was the young man's reply.

"Never be rich on fifty dollars a month and at the head of business in Formosa! Why will you not be rich?"

"Because I have declined the offer and do not mean to be a merchant."

"What! not mean to be a merchant?" cried the old man in surprise. "What do you mean to be?"

"I mean to study and become a preacher of the true religion."

"What true religion?"

"The religion of the one great and true God—the religion that the foreigners brought."

"Do you mean to lose the chance to become a rich man in a year that you may tell people of a foreign religion?" Then, thinking for a moment, he continued, "Do the foreigners hire you to do it?"

"They want me to do it, and will pay me," answered Choh Lin.

"Oh, I see: they give more than the business-foreigner. How much do they give?"

"Two dollars and a half a month while I am studying, and as soon as I am able to preach they will give me more, perhaps eight dollars."

"Two dollars and a half now, eight after a while!" spoke the old man—"fifty dollars now, perhaps five hundred after a while! Does your foreign religion teach you such folly as that?" and, without saying any more, the old man turned away disgusted. He told the story to others and said that the foreign religion made people crazy.

Choh Lin's real friends in Tay Soa urged him not to give up his good chance in business, and warned him against preaching the new religion. They said it would bring him trouble and death,

and would probably bring calamity on his native village. Others ridiculed, and were ready even to persecute, him. But the few who had become interested in the gospel said nothing.

Choh Lin soon returned to Amoy. The warnings of friends, the ridicule of enemies, were hard to bear, but it was far worse to listen to the coaxing and threats of the old grandmother.

The theological seminary in which Choh Lin studied was very different from our ideas of such a school. It was one small, dark room, with a few benches and desks. There was no library, but the one great and best Book was there. There were, however, a few books and an old map or two from America.

Besides Choh Lin, there were four or five other young men studying for the ministry or to be teachers, and two or three older ones who spent some time in the city studying, but were most of their time in the country preaching.

The professors were a Chinese teacher and two or three young missionaries. These latter, though learned men, were not well enough acquainted with the language of the people to be able to give young Chinamen the best of training for the ministry.

It was a humble seminary in which Choh Lin prepared for the ministry, but that humble school has grown, until now it can be fairly dignified by the name of a theological seminary. The work it has already done is having an effect on the city and

the country around Amoy, but that work has only begun. Long after Choh Lin and those men who were its first professors shall have joined the company of the blessed the theological seminary at Amoy will reach the greatness of its power. Then the work of those modest young missionaries will be shown to be the truest and wisest statesmanship with which foreigners have blessed China.

Choh Lin's whole heart was in his studies: he hardly took time to rest, and the result of overstudy was soon seen. He grew thin and a troublesome cough appeared. Still, he kept at work. Though the missionaries warned him to study less and take more exercise, he kept at his close application. After a while there came alarming symptoms: there were slight hemorrhages, as it was supposed, of the lungs. Choh Lin was now alarmed, and listened to the advice of his teachers and took more rest. But the cough continued, and it seemed that consumption would soon take the young man's life.

A foreign physician ordered him to give up study altogether and leave the city. He advised Choh Lin, instead of going away to another country, to go with the fishing-boats sailing from Amoy out on the ocean and become a fisherman. This was a strange prescription, but the doctor saw that the young man needed air, exercise and something to keep him from study.

It was a severe trial to Choh Lin, but as the mis-

sionaries said he must obey the physician's order, and his mother and brother agreed to it, he became a fisherman. It was a hard life, to be tossed on the waters in a little vessel, to live with rough men on poor food, to sleep in a dirty, wet boat, and, worse than all, to be obliged to work hard and to risk the dangers of the ocean. Many times he wished himself ashore in the seminary or in his own home. Many times, too, he wished that he had listened to the missionaries and not studied so hard. He believed more than ever that the missionaries were wise men. He determined to follow their advice in future. But it proved hard advice before long.

The change of air and ways of living, as well as the constant exercise, soon proved the wisdom of the physician's advice. The cough lessened, his appetite returned and he grew stout and rugged. As soon as he felt better he went to the missionaries on his return from one of the fishing-voyages and asked to be taken back to the school. It was a trial to be told that he had not yet grown strong enough, and that he must go back to the fishing-boat. He obeyed, though far from willingly. These fishing-trips became more and more unpleasant to him, and he could not understand why he must continue them, for to himself he seemed well. Not until he had been a fisherman for a whole year did the physician say that he might return to his studies, and not until that permission was given did the missionaries welcome him back to the seminary.

It was a long and tedious year for Choh Lin among the fishermen. Perhaps he thought then of the business opportunities he had refused; perhaps he longed to be in business, instead of being a student and again losing his health. If he did have such longings, he kept them secret. But some of his friends, especially those at Tay Soa, thought that he would have been wiser had he gone into business instead of wasting his strength in study. His grandmother said that he was sick because he had deserted the religion of his fathers, and that the gods had sent the illness as a punishment. She further said that the gods would take his life if he continued to serve the foreign God. When he came back restored and strong, old Mrs. Lee felt sure that she was right, for as soon as her grandson gave up study and left the missionaries he became better. She begged her daughter-in-law not to let him go back to school to die.

Rugged, healthy and happy, the young man went back to the seminary more satisfied than ever that the foreigners were wiser than his own countrymen. Probably not a Chinaman would have told him to go to fishing for his health, but the foreign doctor had; obeying, he was now well. Great are the foreigners! thought Choh Lin.

But higher thoughts were in his heart. In all he believed that God had been present, and that divine mercy had spared and restored him to health. Yes, even though a foreigner had advised his going

with the fishermen, it was God who had brought that foreigner to China. God had sent the missionaries there to teach him and his countrymen the way to Christ. This was the greatest of mercies, and Choh Lin determined to prove his gratitude by giving himself more entirely to the service of God.

He began his studies with new zeal, but with more wisdom. He took more rest, and found himself better able than before to study. But a new way of resting from study was ordered by the missionaries. The students were sent off occasionally to the mission-stations to preach on the Sabbath. In this way they had variety in their work, as well as an opportunity to use the knowledge they had gained. They also learned how to preach by practicing preaching; they saw, too, something of the work they would soon be set apart to do.

Choh Lin was happy, yet full of fear, when told to go off to one of the mission-stations on Saturday and aid the helper there to preach on the next day. It is true he had addressed small meetings, but he had not preached to a regular Sabbath audience. He had often thought and studied what to say when he did preach. He had longed for the time when he might preach, and now, before he had expected, it had come. He started for the station with some fear, and yet with a little pride too. He had been praised often, and it would have been strange had he believed that all who praised him had told falsehoods. Though not without pride, he felt that he

was to speak the Lord's words. He prayed that the right words might be chosen and so presented that the people could not but hear and believe. Perhaps there was a feeling of expectation that the people would listen with wonder at the eloquence of the speaker, and then would be so impressed by what he said that they would be unable to turn away from the truth. If he expected to see his hearers weep as they listened and then cry, "What must we do to be saved?" he would not have been very unlike some other young preachers.

When he began to preach the audience looked at the young speaker with no little interest. His fine form, pleasing manner and pleasant voice, as well as his youth, held their attention for a while, nor were they without interest in the words he spoke. But after a time some faces turned from him, and here and there a man was looking at his neighbors, talking to the one next to him, looking up to the ceiling, turning over the leaves of the hymn-book, and one or two were asleep. The conduct was much like that of a congregation in an American church, only in our country it would be a Christian audience; Choh Lin's was mostly heathen. It would have been very discouraging to the young preacher had there not been some who listened attentively to the whole sermon. At its close the young man felt not a little discouraged to find that his words had seemingly had little effect. He did not think that they were as seeds in new ground—that his hearers were hea-

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then men with hearts little prepared for the truth. He expected to reap a harvest at once from the seed sown.

Though disappointed, the young preacher was learning a lesson of faith; he was also learning that it is not by might nor by power, but by the Lord's Spirit, that souls are converted. He was disappointed, but not discouraged; he only determined the more to continue preaching.

In these preaching-excursions he did not think that all his work was done when from the pulpit he told the people of a Saviour. Before and after service, sitting in the little chapel with only one or two hearers, he often preached more effective sermons than from the pulpit itself. One and another listened attentively as he told the old story, though new to them, of a Saviour's love. Some were deeply interested, and asked many questions and seemed anxious to learn more. But others, as soon as he told them to give up the worship of the spirits of the dead and their own evil ways, did not care to hear anything more about this new religion.

Many times was he asked, "What are you telling these things for?" "How much do the foreiguers give you for teaching their religion?" "What will they give me to become a follower of their gods?" More than one offered to become Christians if Choh Lin would ensure them positions, a chance to make money. But the people could not understand why foreigners should teach their religion to others, and

even pay men to do it, when there seemed no way of making money by it. They would not believe that it was done from love to Christ and anxiety for souls. Many believed that there was some deception hidden, and that preaching the gospel was only another foreign way of getting money from the Chinese. In vain Choh Lin tried to explain; people would not believe. They knew that *they* would not do such things for nothing; they knew, too, that other foreigners were always trying to make money, and so believed that missionaries had some selfish purpose. Many, therefore, listened in great doubt to the young preacher.

"Ah, yes," said one, "you may be in earnest—so you must be, or the foreigners would discharge you —but you are yet young and the foreigners have not let you see what they mean to do. Have any of our mandarins or great men become worshipers of the foreign God? They know more than we, and see that it is not wise to desert the religion of our country. When they listen and follow this new religion, then we will think about it."

These and many other objections might have discouraged the young preacher had there not been another side to the work. His own heart was full of joy as he told men of a Saviour. He knew that he was doing the work the Lord intended him to do. Then, too, there were some who not only listened, but asked to know more. They came each time he preached. They showed that they believed

what he said, and wished to find a better God than they knew in their country.

Gradually did Choh Lin engage more and more in preaching. Sometimes, when the regular preachers were ill or obliged to go away on preaching-tours, the students were sent to take their places, and sometimes they stayed a week or two at these stations. During the summer season most of the time of the students was spent in the country at these stations. On their return from their work each young man had learned something and had something to ask the teachers.

CHAPTER XXV.

CHI LAP AND THE GRANDMOTHER BECOME CHRISTIANS.

THOUGH Chi Lap had for a long time attended chapel-service and was often in the inquiry-room, yet he had not confessed Christ publicly when his grandmother came to Amoy. He was a praying young man and tried to live right, but he had not given himself to Christ. He feared that he might suffer by becoming a Christian, and he waited.

Shortly after his sister and grandmother came to Amoy urgent business called Chi Lap to his native village. He had heard that the enemies of Tay Soa had sent soldiers down to watch the village, and knew that it would be difficult to pass these men in safety; yet he resolved to try it. Instead of taking the regular route, he landed some distance below the place, determining to walk the rest of the way and enter the village from an unusual direction.

When he approached the town he saw, to his surprise and terror, that it was surrounded by the enemy, who seemed to be besieging the place. Not having yet been noticed by the soldiers, he stopped and hid while he thought what was best to be done.

His business was urgent; he must try to enter Tay Soa, yet to do so might make him a prisoner of the besieging army. If known to belong to the Lee family, he would be held until a price was paid by his friends for his ransom.

Chi Lap was proud and not lacking in courage. He wanted to be known as a man who did his duty; so he was unwilling to turn back. He said to himself, "This business must be attended to; it is my duty to go ahead and do it, yet I shall probably be captured, for I cannot pass the soldiers without being seen. But if I go back people will call me a coward; they will say I cannot be trusted with business, and it may cause me to lose my place. There is one thing I can do, and that is pray to the foreign God. The foreign teachers say that he can do great things; mother and Choh Lin say so, too, and I partly believe it. Why should not I ask him to help me now? If he is so great and so willing to hear prayer, why will he not help me and keep those soldiers from harming me? I will try him, and if he does hear and save me I will after that become his servant."

Chi Lap knelt down and prayed in a low voice that he might be saved from the enemies of Tay Soa and be brought back in safety to Amoy. How well he prayed none can now say.

When he arose from his knees it was with a determination to trust to the foreign God and go forward. Steadily, but with anxious heart, he walked

toward the village and the soldiers. Without saying a word, he passed the line, expecting every moment to be stopped and taken prisoner. The men looked at him as he came up, talked about him—at least so Chi Lap supposed—but said not a word to him, and quietly allowed the young man to pass by into the village. Not until he reached it and saw that he was not yet in the hands of the enemy did he breathe freely. When he found himself comparatively safe he could hardly help kneeling down to thank God for hearing his prayer.

His friends praised his bravery, saying that he would become a great general, since he dared, alone and unarmed, to walk up to and pass an army of hostile soldiers. Chi Lap thought that if they could have heard his heart beat and known his feelings when he passed the enemy his friends would not call him brave. Yet he was really courageous. True bravery is not absence of fear, but going forward in the way of duty in spite of fear.

Chi Lap said nothing to the people of Tay Soa about his prayer, nor yet of his determination to become a Christian. He knew how his mother and brother had been persecuted by them for worshiping the God of the foreigners, and he had no wish to endure their persecution. He was brave enough to face the enemy, but not brave enough to confess Christ to his friends. He had prayed to be protected from the one, but had not asked God for help to meet the other.

He finished his business as soon as he could and took the first opportunity to go by boat to Amoy. The enemies did not keep as close a watch on the water as they did on the land, and it was possible for boats to come and go at night. When he reached Amoy he told his story, with no little gratitude to God for his care over him, and at once confessed that he meant to be a Christian.

"God heard my prayer," said he; "why should I not serve him? He alone kept those soldiers from harming me. Because of his care I am free; so I belong to him."

There was a marked change in Chi Lap after that. He soon joined the Church, and for years was an active and faithful member of it. When he had been for some time in Formosa, and had grown rich, then he was led into temptation and fell before it, as we have learned, yet, we trust, not in a final fall.

To his dying day Chi Lap could give no other explanation of his escape from the soldiers than that God heard his prayer and took care of him; nor can the author give any other. The God who shut the lions' mouths so that they should not hurt Daniel could control the soldiers so that they let the young man pass their lines. "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me:" Chi Lap tried that promise and found it good.

The object of the soldiers in besieging Tay Soa

was to frighten the people and force them to pay a price to be let alone, rather than to kill them. If the villagers could not be forced to do this, then the enemy would attack the village and try to carry away prisoners, to be held until a price should be paid for their freedom.

We leave Chi Lap now and turn to the grandmother. When she came to Amoy it was with many a secret vow that she would not become a Christian. She determined not to have anything to do with Christians, and not to go to a chapel where the foreign religion was taught. She even resolved not to speak to a missionary, and, if possible, not to allow one of them to speak to or see her, lest in some way they should lead her to change her religion.

"Why should I change?" said she to herself. "My religion is good enough for me, and it satisfied my fathers. As they lived I will, and as they died so will I die."

Yet there came to her mind the sad questions, "Who will care for my spirit when I am gone? Who will feed and clothe it? Who will care for the spirits of my dead ancestors? What shall I say when I meet them in the spirit-world, and they ask me why they are neglected? Can I tell my son that his children and his wife left the religion of the Middle Kingdom for that of foreigners? Must I say that this happened while I was living?"

Such sad thoughts made old Mrs. Lee determined to try to win back her grandchildren to idolatry,

and made her more willing to go to Amoy, where she might influence them.

At Amoy she was a stranger. Being in a Christian home, there was little opportunity for her to become acquainted with heathen women, but she often met Christian people. As Christian women were few, they were the more in each other's company. Knowing the feelings of the elder Mrs. Lee toward the gospel, these said very little to her about it, but they spared no pains to make her feel contented in her new home. Before long, in spite of her determination to have nothing to do with Christians, the old lady learned to like her new friends. She was specially pleased that they said so little against the religion of China and seemed willing that she should worship as she chose.

Some time after leaving Tay Soa she became ill. This illness increased until her recovery was doubtful. Christian women came in to see and care for her. They treated her as if she were a mother. Any delicacy that might tempt the appetite was brought in and she was coaxed to eat it. Day and night kind friends watched by the old lady, doing all in their power for her comfort. They occasionally spoke to her about the true God, yet were kind and gentle in telling her of a Saviour, saying little to offend. They constantly prayed for her salvation, though usually when she did not hear. The younger Mrs. Lee, however, could not hide her anxiety for her mother-in-law, nor could she help at

times praying by the old lady's bedside. But it was so gently done that old Mrs. Lee was not at all offended. Indeed, the continued kindness of all made her lose her hatred of Christianity, and she was willing that they should pray for her recovery.

To her it was a mystery why these people should care so much for a stranger, an old woman, and poor too. When she asked they answered that this was their duty as taught by the Christian religion; they did it because they were trying to obey God. No explanation, however, would at first satisfy old Mrs. Lee, and again and again she asked her daughter-in-law, "Why do they do these things? Why are they so kind? I can never pay them; I have no money. I am no relative of theirs, not even an acquaintance from whom they may some day expect a reward. I am only a poor old woman who must soon go to the spirit-world, and can in no way return their favors here. True, I may in the spirit-world, and gladly will I do all I can there for such kind friends. Yet it is strange why they are so good to me."

Once, when the younger Mrs. Lee said that all was done from love to Christ, the old lady replied, "That may all be, but people in the Middle Kingdom do not love the gods so much as that. They love and serve the gods to receive something, but what does the foreign God care for me? I don't pray to him; I never serve him. What good will he do them for their care of me?"

Being told that the God of the foreigners cared for all, and even loved those who did not serve him, the old lady was surprised, though she had no doubt heard the same truth before, and said, "What! care for and even love those who are not his friends, who never worship him? That cannot be; gods never do that."

Slowly this idea entered her mind and filled her with wonder at the difference between the God of the foreigners and the gods of the Chinese. She was scarcely less surprised to notice, sick as she was, that the women who watched by her occasionally kneeled beside the bed when they thought her asleep and in a low voice prayed for her recovery. "Why should they pray that I may get well?" she asked herself. "Why do they wish me to live? If I do not die, some one else must. Death will have his full share; if not the old, then he takes the young; and if I am spared some of their own relatives, or even themselves, may be taken."

She did not die. After a while she began to improve, and slowly recovered her health. When able to talk more she was ready to converse with Christians about their religion. She was glad to talk with Choh Lin and his brother, and seemed to have lost all wish to win them back to idolatry.

One day Choh Lin said to her, "Grandmother, you often asked why our friends were so kind to you, a stranger. I'll tell you: it was because God has changed their hearts."

"Why did he change their hearts?" she asked. "Do those whose hearts are changed ever speak evil words or have evil thoughts?"

"Yes, grandmother," answered he; "sometimes they do, but it is because they do not ask God to keep them from evil or do not trust enough in him. They are like plants that droop when they have no water. Christ is the Christian's water of life."

"Don't they hate their enemies any more?" she asked.

"No. The Lord says we must love our enemies, bless them that curse us and do good to them that use us badly."

"Is that too in your religion? It is not in ours. We hate those who hate us; yes, and keep hating even after we go to the spirit-world," she added in a lower voice. After they had talked for a while she continued: "Our religion is to do to others as they do to us; the foreign religion is to do to them as we wish they would do to us." Then she murmured, "Yes, it is a good religion. It is good to the sick and to the stranger; it has been good to me." Choh Lin thought her asleep, but she was thinking aloud.

As she grew better she was the more ready to listen while others talked about the Saviour. She often asked questions and became more and more interested. She was glad to have others pray with and for her, yet for some time seemed unwilling to

ask them to do so. One day she said to those attending her, "That is a good doctrine about loving those who do not love you. If more obeyed it this world would be much more happy than it is now. Who first taught it?"

"God himself," was the reply.

"It must have been a God who could think of such things; men think only of getting, not of giving—of rewarding evil for evil, and sometimes evil for good, rather than good for evil. None but a God could have given such a religion to man, and I want to know about that God." This was said as if at last she had broken through a great barrier that restrained her. She then continued: "That God has been very good to me. When I came here, a stranger, he sent you to care for me; you, who are his people, did more for the old stranger than sisters would do. None of those who worship the gods of the Middle Kingdom have cared for me. The gods I have served for so many years have deserted me, while the God of foreigners has cared for me. Yes, he has heard the prayers of his people, and has saved my life and is restoring me to health. He is the God whom I will serve."

From this time old Mrs. Lee was a changed woman. She no longer hesitated to ask the way to the Saviour.

None were more glad than were Choh Lin and his mother to welcome the old lady among those who worshiped the true God. Mrs. Lee felt now

that her joy was nearly full. Her three children were Christians, her favorite son was studying for the ministry, and now the old mother-in-law was seeking Christ. Patiently had Mrs. Lee borne unkind treatment and bitter words; earnestly, constantly and hopefully had she prayed for her mother-in-law's conversion; now her patience was rewarded, her prayers were answered. All through those years the younger Mrs. Lee had believed that her prayers would be answered, yet the delay had been a great trial to her faith. Now that faith obtained its reward, she felt that she could not be thankful enough. Many times did she, with tears of joy, tell how good the Lord had been to her, and urge others to trust him more.

When old Mrs. Lee was able to go out, the first place she wished to visit was the chapel, where from the preacher she might hear the gospel. She took delight in worshiping with God's people and telling in the inquiry-meeting what the Lord had done for her. "I want to be with the people of the God who did so much for me when I did not love him," said she to the missionary. "I want to be with them, not for what I can get, but for what I want to give them. They are always doing me good, while I can do nothing in return. I am only a beggar, yet it is not hard to beg from loving brothers and sisters who only wish to know what I need. Best of all is it to receive such goodness from a God who is willing to call a poor worthless old woman

like me *daughter*. It is a good religion; it is the one I need."

Gradually the old lady learned the true way. She was old, her mind worked slowly; it was difficult for her to unlearn many things that for a lifetime she had been learning, and more difficult still to overcome the evil habits of a lifetime. But she gained, and the change in her became great. After instructing her for some time the missionaries baptized and received her into the Church.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CHOH LIN MARRIED AND A PREACHER.

IT must not be supposed that because this is a true story it is to have in it nothing of love and marriage. Love is a part of life, therefore writers who wish to make their fictitious stories real tell of love. But too often their tales seem as if love were the only thing worth telling about in this world. God made us to love and be loved in this world, but that is not the only object of life. Those who make it such make their lives failures as far as others are concerned, and often failures as far as their own happiness is concerned. Those who live for *doing good* will be more loved and happier than those who think only of loving and being loved.

The Chinese believe that children should love their parents and parents their children, and admit that husbands and wives should love each other; yet they do not believe it wise or well for young people of opposite sexes to love each other at all until engaged. With them engagement for marriage comes first—love afterward, if at all. People in China, as a rule, do not marry because they love,

but because it is the custom and because they wish homes and families of their own.

In America it is the custom for each man to carry a watch. He who can gets a gold one, but many must content themselves with one of silver, while a few own nothing but a nickel watch, and some are too poor to own a watch at all. It is somewhat so in China with marrying. Men get wives if they can, and the best they can afford, but some are too poor to *own* a wife, while some own several. Men are not so anxious there to marry rich wives, because a daughter does not usually take with her a share of her father's wealth beyond the presents given at the wedding. After marriage a woman loses most of her claim on her father's family. She belongs to her husband and to his family, and is even treated at times by her own relatives as if dead.

Men do not always make their own choice; on the contrary, the parents or friends of young men and boys frequently choose the wife and complete the engagement. This is often done without consulting the one most interested. Some day the young man is told that he is engaged to be married to a young lady whom he may never have met. He usually takes it as a matter of course. The young lady is rarely consulted. She is engaged, or sold, to a stranger, often with little more regard to her feelings than if she were a horse or a cow.

The time for engagements varies, some being

promised in marriage only a short time before the wedding, and others are engaged in their youth. It is not an unusual thing for parents to engage their infants, and these engagements last.

Marriages in China, it can readily be seen, are not always happy; too often they are wretched.

When Choh Lin was fifteen years of age, and before he had decided to become a preacher, the older brother of a young girl in the city visited Mrs. Lee and tried to make arrangements with her for the engagement of Choh Lin to his sister. The girl was intelligent, rather pretty, of good disposition and of a family fully equal to that of Choh Lin, and, moreover, was a professed Christian. Mrs. Lee knew that she would be likely to make a suitable wife for her son. The fact that she had been brought up as a Christian made her the more acceptable to Mrs. Lee. Besides, Choh Lin was now approaching manhood, and it was fully time that a wife should be chosen for him. But his mother was unable to pay for a wife for her son, so she frankly told the man that she could not afford to give what would be expected as engagement-money.

"We do not want any money now," was the answer. "You will be able when your sons are earning more to pay, and we will wait. We want a good husband for our sister."

But Mrs. Lee, while satisfied with the girl, was unwilling to bind herself to pay, so the engagement was not made.

Shortly after this a near relative of another girl in the city called on Mrs. Lee, and broached the subject of the marriage of Mrs. Lee's son.

"Yes," said Mrs. Lee, "Chi Lap is old enough, and should have a wife, but he is so busy now that he cannot take time to select a wife. Besides, he is rapidly rising in business and will some day be a rich man; then he can afford to get a much better wife than now."

"'Rising in business'?" spoke the visitor in surprise. "Has he left school? Why did he stop?"

"He has not been at school for some years," replied the mother.

"Oh, I was speaking of your younger son," said the woman. "He has had no wife chosen for him yet, has he?"

"No, he is quite young and there is no hurry," answered Mrs. Lee. "It will be time enough to select a wife when he has decided on the business he is to follow; besides, I do not wish to see him married before his older brother."

"One need not interfere with the other," replied the woman. "There are enough beautiful and cultivated girls for both, and many families who would be glad to marry their daughters to your sons."

After flattering Mrs. Lee for a while the woman proposed that Choh Lin be engaged to her relative.

"I am too poor now," replied Mrs. Lee, "to make arrangements for the marriage of my younger son. He must wait until we are richer."

"We do not ask much money," said the woman; "if you will only promise your son, a small amount of money will be enough to satisfy us for losing our relative."

Mrs. Lee nevertheless refused to make the engagement until better able to pay the amount usually expected, and the woman left disappointed.

Choh Lin was a bright youth, a good student and gave promise of being a learned and noted man; so he was regarded as a desirable husband. Such a young man could not fail to have offers of a wife, and even have them repeated. In a year or two the man who first offered his sister to Mrs. Lee as a wife for her younger son called again and urged the suit for his sister. Believing that Choh Lin would bring no little honor to his wife and to her family, the brother of the young lady made unusual offers.

At the engagement a price is fixed for the bride, part of it to be paid then and the rest at the wedding. This price varies according to the wealth, beauty, rank, intelligence and many other qualifications of the bride. It may vary, too, if more than one man wishes the same maiden. Her relatives can then demand a high rate, since the demand is more than the supply.

The brother and mother of the young lady were so anxious to get Choh Lin that they offered her to Mrs. Lee for thirty dollars—a very low price for such a desirable wife—and further agreed to wait

for all the money until the wedding, and then, if Choh Lin were unable to pay all, they would take even less.

The bargain was finally made, and Choh Lin, when about sixteen years old, was engaged to be married. The engagement, once made, could not be broken without incurring shame and disgrace. The fact that he was engaged to be married gave Choh Lin but little care. He did not call to see the young lady—that, in Chinese society, would have been regarded as very improper—nor did he write to her or receive messages from her. The two were almost strangers, and such they must remain until the wedding-day. He had, however, seen her as a little girl in school when he first came to Amoy. If he gave the subject much thought, it was that of satisfaction that there was one less care for him now: a wife had been chosen, and it only remained to fix the wedding-day, and, when that arrived, be married. It was not a matter of love at all, but of business, and he was told that the business had been well done, a good bargain made; why should he worry himself?

When he was twenty years old the wedding-day came. It was a day of festivity and gladness to Choh Lin and to his fellow-students, but less a time of festivity to the bride.

Since her engagement her mother and brother had died, and she was left to the care of more distant relatives. While her friends took charge of

the preparations the absence of these two destroyed much of the happiness of the young lady, yet it made her look forward with more hopeful anxiety to the time when, instead of mother and brother, she would have a husband to care for her. But what would the husband, what would the wife be? It need not be told how anxious each was to meet the other and see if all that had been told was true, and if either had changed since childhood.

The bride, dressed in brilliant colors, was carried in a closed red sedan-chair to the home of Choh Lin. He, too, was dressed in his best, waiting to receive the wedding-procession. It was an anxious moment to the two when he stepped to the sedan as it was set down at his home. Then he opened the door of the chair and for the first time since childhood looked on the face of his bride, and she on the face of her husband.

As Mrs. Lee, her son and the bride were Christians, the ceremony resembled a marriage-ceremony in America. After the wedding the young couple settled down quietly to married life. Owing to the death of her near relatives the bride did not bring the usual number of presents, and Choh Lin had less money to pay to her relatives for his wife. They accepted twenty-four dollars as a fair price, considering the circumstances. Of course the Chinese deny that the money is given to pay for a wife, yet admit that it is meant to make amends for the loss her relatives feel at her leaving them.

Choh Lin and his wife soon learned that neither was perfect, yet each found in the other a true and faithful companion, and before they had been married many months they had learned to love each other fondly. Some years after their marriage the author visited them in their home and saw that there can come true love to the hearts of those who are strangers on their wedding-day. But Choh Lin's experience is not like that of many married people in China. Their lives are wretched; unloved they live and unloved they die. A married life without love they find a miserable slavery.

For some time before his marriage Choh Lin's time had been largely given to preaching. At length the work became so urgent that the missionaries were obliged to take the older students altogether from their studies and place them in charge of the different fields. He had been married only a short time when they told him one day that he must give up study in the seminary and move out into the country to take charge, with another preacher, of a large mission-field where the people seemed ready and anxious to hear the gospel.

"We would like you to remain here and study longer," said they—"you are yet too young to have so much work and responsibility placed on you—yet what else can we do? The Lord has heard the prayer of the Church and has opened the field for us; now we must try to occupy it. We are few, but the Lord will be with us. It may be that after

a while you will be able to return and study, but now it seems the Lord's will that you give all your time to preaching."

"As you say, teachers, so will I do," answered Choh Lin. "I gave myself to the Lord for his work, and do not mean to keep part of myself back now, and thus be like Ananias and Sapphira. If you think I can do the work, send me. I am glad to do the Lord's will, only I wish that I were better fitted for it."

Choh Lin went to the mission-field alone, leaving his wife in Amoy, intending as soon as he could make arrangements to move to the field and live there. He longed to stay at Amoy or near the city, where so many Christians were and where he had so many friends. To leave behind those whom he loved, to give up the associations and the comforts he had there, to live among heathen people, made the sacrifice no small one for the young man. But a greater trial was before him, and one that he dreaded more than any other. He must have charge in part of a mission. True, the older preacher would have the principal charge, but Choh Lin knew enough of the work to know that the older man would stay at the principal station and send him to preach and take charge of one or more of the smaller ones connected with it. How could he do this? How meet the opposition of idolaters? How meet their shrewd schemes to drive him away? How keep the Christians and

the inquirers from getting into trouble with the heathen? How hold his position and yet keep peace? A single mistake on his part might destroy the effect of all that had been done and prevent for years the preaching of the gospel again in the place. Then, too, what would the people think of him? What heed would the heathen give to the words of such a youth?

A more serious trouble seemed before him. How should he be able to teach inquirers the way to Christ and to heaven? What if he make a mistake and direct them wrong? What if he lead men away from Christ?

As these thoughts came to the mind of the young man he was almost ready to refuse to become a preacher. He thought and prayed over the matter, he read the Bible to learn more clearly his duty, but could see only one course, and that was to go forward and do the work to which the Lord had called him. He remembered Jonah; he also remembered the Lord's promise, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and he went forward.

The new work was even more difficult than he supposed; so the strength he received to do it was greater than he expected. With every trial he found new help given, yet it seemed to him as if the heathen made special efforts to trouble and perplex him. While usually polite, they occasionally were unkind and insulting, telling him that he was taking foreigners' money to betray his own people

and their religion to a foreign people and a foreign God. In a quiet way and by shrewd means they sought to drive him away. They tried to frighten the man who had rented a house for a chapel, so that he should demand it back. They tried, by telling of a probable war against foreigners and all who held to their religion, to make Choh Lin afraid to preach. Bills were found posted along the streets warning people not to forsake their own for a foreign religion, and telling of the danger of attending chapel-services. Now and then, during worship in the chapel, stones were thrown on the roof to frighten the worshipers. Those who came to hear the gospel were threatened if they continued to attend the chapel. Many were frightened away, and some who seemed really interested in the gospel stayed away for fear of persecution.

Choh Lin was often sick at heart, and not without serious fears lest he might suffer violence, yet he kept faithfully at his work. He could now understand the persecutions the apostles suffered. He could understand, too, what the Saviour meant when he said, "Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." The young preacher felt that presence. In his darkest hours he could look upward and see light there; in his weakest moments he felt a strong arm supporting him.

His work was not without results. In spite of threats, some did come to the chapel; they listened too, and more, they believed the truth he taught.

One and another stayed after the sermon to talk with the preacher about "the doctrine." Gradually light came to their souls, and one by one they gave themselves to Christ. Only those who have led souls to Jesus can understand the joy of Choh Lin as these told him that they had found the Saviour. His voice and theirs united in many a song of thanksgiving over what the Lord had done for their souls.

For a long time Choh Lin did not think it best to bring his wife to the place where duty called him. Those were happy times when he was able for a few days to leave his station and go to Amoy to his home and to Christian friends. He soon learned the value of his good wife's sympathizing words and cheerful counsels, but more still did he prize the helpful words and helpful advice of the missionaries. He said they seemed to lift his faith above the clouds and showed him the sun always shining there. From these visits the young preacher returned with stronger heart and more earnest zeal.

It was not the purpose of the missionaries to keep the young men steadily in the same place, but to change them about, that they might not be compelled to study so hard in preparing their sermons, and also to give them a chance to work under the care of different leaders among the older preachers. Then, as soon as a young man proved himself fitted for a larger and more important field, the missionaries speedily promoted him.

Thus, Choh Lin was changed about from one station to another, though most of the time at a distance from Amoy. After a few years he was promoted to be at the head of a principal station, where he remained in charge for some time, and then was placed over one of the most important of all the stations connected with the mission. But of this more will be told in a later chapter.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE GOSPEL AT TAY SOA.

WHEN the missionaries inquired of Mrs. Lee about the village in which she had lived, she told them that none except herself had heard a missionary preach, but that she had spoken to some about the foreign God, and added, "Few care to hear about him; the most say that I must not speak in the village of any but the gods of the Middle Kingdom."

"Do you obey?" was asked.

"No," was her reply, "but I say nothing to those who are angry, for fear it will only make them hate the doctrine the more. There are some who are willing to listen, and one or two who want to know more. I wish that the foreign teachers could visit Tay Soa and tell the people of the doctrine. You could make it so plain that they would see it to be good."

More than once Mrs. Lee invited and even urged the missionaries to go to Tay Soa to preach the gospel to the people. As their number was so small and their work in the city as well as outside of it so great, it was some time before they were able to

visit the village. Meanwhile, Mrs. Lee's talks, and still more her life, were having an effect on some of the people. The change in her had been great —too great to pass unnoticed by a watchful and gossiping people. They had not forgotten her search for the life-giving God, and saw from her manner and her life that she believed she had found this God. There was a marked change that they could not help noticing. She had no longer unkind and harsh things to say of her enemies. She said little about them, and that little was rather tinged with sadness than hate.

"Yes, they have wronged me," said she one day to a friend, "but I must bear it patiently. The great Upper Ruler (the Chinese Christian name for God) will make it all right some time; he knows what is best."

"What!" asked the friend in surprise, "do you think it best for you to be robbed of all your property? I think it would have been best if the robbers were made to pay back and then go to prison. I do not see how it can be best for you to be made to work so hard for your living, when, had it not been for those robbers, you would have plenty, and to spare for your needy friends."

"It will be for the best in the end," replied Mrs. Lee quietly. "Even now I see how it has proved for the best. Had I not been poor I would not have been in Amoy and would not have heard about the life-giving God."

"But then you would not have needed him," spoke the other.

"'Would not have needed him'?" replied Mrs. Lee, looking up in surprise: "I always needed him, but did not know it. I was like a thirsty person who dreams of water, but awakens to know that he is dying from thirst. When I sought among the temples for the life-giving God, then in dreams I was feeling my thirst and seeking to quench it, but not until I heard in the chapel of the true God did I awaken to know that I was dying from thirst. Yes, there I awoke, and there too found the living Fountain of water. No, no, it is well. My poverty made me go to Amoy, and there I became rich. The good Upper Ruler allowed me to lose my earthly property that I might have a share in his eternal and heavenly riches. It was best."

Talks like these left an impression on her friends. They saw that Mrs. Lee was moved by a different spirit, and many were the remarks made about her by her neighbors. Nor were these all against her. The people saw that she was not affected by ridicule. Instead of persecution arousing her to anger and to reply in bitter words, it only seemed to make her more gentle and kind. True, there were times when her old nature, aroused beyond the power of the new and better one to control it, showed itself in angry words. This was not often, and was always followed by acts of kindness that really perplexed the people of Tay Soa more than her general change

of conduct. Returning good for evil is not a Chinese custom.

Mrs. Lee was not backward to speak about the true God to those who were ready to listen, and gladly visited and talked with those who showed any interest in the gospel. But she was obliged to be very careful, lest those opposed to the truth should persecute those to whom she talked. Some who would willingly have listened dared not speak to Mrs. Lee about Christianity, and hardly dared visit or speak to her at all, lest others should accuse them of wishing to become worshipers of the foreign God.

In spite of all opposition and persecution, some in Tay Soa became deeply interested in the gospel, and their interest continued, so that when one of the missionaries visited the village not long after Mrs. Lee moved to Amoy, there were others besides Mrs. Lee, who was at Tay Soa on a visit, glad to welcome him. Of course the people all gathered to see and listen to the foreigner. Many had never before seen one, and to them he was a great curiosity.

The missionary's visit made no little talk in Tay Soa. His dress, his appearance, his way of speaking their language, were all discussed; and when these subjects grew old the doctrine he taught formed an unending topic for discussion. Men talked of it on the street, women talked of it in their homes, husbands and wives talked of it in their families. Some

were bitter against the missionary and the foreign religion, and some merely spoke of both as curiosities, while a few showed that they were friendly to both missionary and doctrine. Nearly all of these were Mrs. Lee's friends and persons with whom she had already talked of Christianity. Those who were friendly were careful, though, to say little in favor of the gospel in the presence of its enemies, and specially careful were they to say and do nothing that might arouse against themselves persecution such as Mrs. Lee had suffered.

When Mrs. Lee removed to Amoy, there had been no little discussion and bitter feeling. Some said that she had gone to be a servant and a spy for the foreigners, and others that the cruelty of the villagers had driven her away.

"Some day the gods will visit Tay Soa with great calamities for what that woman has suffered," said a man one day to several who were talking about Mrs. Lee's leaving. "The gods have led her away that they may punish the village the more severely."

"We had nothing to do with her suffering," replied another. "It was her own relatives who did it. I am willing that the gods shall punish all of them: they deserve it."

"Yes, but we did not hinder their robbing the widow," persisted the other. "We did nothing to help her, and we must suffer with the evil ones. Angry gods are sometimes blind. Yet we also had something to do with her suffering. Have we not

ridiculed her search for the life-giving God, and have we not even persecuted her since she believes that she has found him?"

"'Persecuted her'!" spoke another excitedly. "She deserved it for deserting the worship of the Middle Kingdom for that of outside barbarians. No, no; the gods have not led her away that they may punish, but that they may favor and bless, this village. Let her go; it will be a blessing to us."

"Oh, she has not gone for any such reason," said a man who had been quiet before. "The gods did not send her away, nor has she gone away to worship the foreign God. She is a wise woman. She sees that neither she nor her sons can make money here, but that, aided by the friendship of foreigners, they will earn money rapidly in Amoy; so she goes there. Chi Lap is already earning money in the city ten times as rapidly as he could here; his mother and younger brother will soon be doing the same. Foreigners have ten thousand times as much money as Middle-Kingdom people, and Mrs. Lee is wise enough to take the right way to get it. She becomes a friend of foreigners and follows their religion, but it is that she may win their favor, and so help her sons as well as herself to gain their money. I too would be willing to accept the foreigners' religion could I make a fortune by it; so would every one else."

This speech had a great effect for the time; nor did this effect entirely die away. It made many

think more favorably of Mrs. Lee and of foreigners too—also of their religion, or rather of their money.

Another visit from the missionary followed the first. Though he was not so much of a curiosity as before, the interest in the doctrine was greater. Mrs. Lee's talks were having their effect, and that effect had been increased rather than lessened by her leaving them. But, more still, the discussions about the Christian doctrine had aroused a great deal of interest, and many listened intently to the address of the missionary. There was in it little to anger the most determined idolater, but much to lead him to think. Little was said against the gods of China. They were given all the credit, and far more than they deserved, but their best qualities were contrasted with those of the true God. When the missionary spoke of Christ, he could find nothing in the religion of the Chinese with which to compare or contrast him. Jesus was presented as the God who knew men—knew their souls, understood their need, and came to supply that need, came to save men whom no spirits, no gods besides, could save.

Greater and more earnest discussion followed this than the former visit of the missionary, but now it was the doctrine he taught rather than the man that was discussed. Some had asked many questions; these were regarded as the wise men now, and their opinions about Christianity were considered as worth a great deal. They were ready to give not only the

missionary's words, but as ready to add to them what they supposed he would have said had he been asked certain questions. In this way the foreign teacher was made to teach some things that he would never have thought of saying. Yet many truths remained in the minds of the people, and those truths were working, though slowly.

Mrs. Lee's weekly visits to Tay Soa helped on the effect of the truth. She visited the women and explained many things, so that by several of the women and a few of the men her visits were anticipated with growing interest. After several visits of missionaries it became evident that there were a number of inquirers in the village. It seemed that a mission-station should be formed and a chapel opened at Tay Soa, and regular services held.

When the missionaries tried to hire a house for a chapel their enemies began to make their opposition felt. They went to the man who intended to rent them the house and forbade his doing it. They made such threats that he dared not keep his part of the bargain. He sent word to Amoy that he could not rent his house to the missionaries, nor would an offer of a larger rent make him change his mind. He wanted the money, but he was afraid that if he got it he could not long keep it, if indeed he could keep his life.

Foiled in their efforts to hire this man's house, the missionaries were at a loss what to do. They were determined to open a chapel in Tay Soa, not

only on aeeount of the interest among the people, but to have a station there as a starting-place for the large and populous country beyond.

"I'll tell you how to get a house for a ehapel," said Mrs. Lee. "Let some Christian Chinaman go up there and rent a house for you. When the bargain is made and the owner gets his money regularly, he will not readily turn you out."

Acting on this advice, a house was rented and a chapel opened. As soon as the enemies of Christianity learned how they had been defeated they were more opposed than ever to the gospel. They were not angry at being outwitted, but angry beeause the missionaries had sueceeded. Shrewdness in bargains rarely offends a Chinaman. Though unable to prevent the worship of the foreign God in their village, these men determined to make it as uneomfortable as possible for the worshipers. These were threatened with all manner of punishment, nor were threats alone applied. More than once was violenee used, yet a wholesome fear of the missionaries, who were known to have influence with the mandarins, prevented any great injury being done.

Regular Sabbath serviees were now held by a native preaeher; oeeasionally one of the missionaries preaehed. Quite a large elass of inquirers was formed. For the first time in the history of new stations in and around Amoy the majority of these inquirers were women. Aeeording to Chinese

custom, none but elderly women are allowed to go out into the streets, nor is it deemed proper for even these to be much in gatherings of men. For them to hear the gospel is therefore nearly impossible, except as they hear it through fathers, brothers, husbands or sons. It is no unusual thing for a church to be organized and continued for several years with men only as members. Work by women among the women is bringing about a change in this respect.

The missionaries were surprised to find so many women among the inquirers at Tay Soa, but a question or two made it plain. This was the result of Mrs. Lee's efforts. Her talks in the homes of those willing to allow it had brought the natural results. The prayers of the good woman not only for, but with, her friends had been specially powerful. Mrs. Lee's strong point was prayer. Her equal among Chinese Christians, men as well as women, the author never heard in China. Gifted with good intellect, a pleasing voice, a ready flow of words and beautiful imagery, being a woman of deep emotions, strong faith, and with a heart on fire with love for souls, it was almost impossible to listen to her supplications without being affected by them.

For a number of months the missionaries and native preachers visited and preached in the chapel at Tay Soa; and then a Christian was placed in charge as chapel-keeper. It was this man's duty to attend to the building, conduct the daily morning

and evening worship, and even lead the Sabbath service if no preacher came. He was also expected to talk to the people about the gospel.

When Choh Lin was able to be away from school at Amoy and visit Tay Soa, it was his delight to be present at these services. His heart was glad when he welcomed several of his old friends to the chapel, and his joy was great when he met his early companions, Oan and Jip. He knew that their excuse, that they came from curiosity, was not the only reason. Their eager faces as they listened to his words told more than language could that they were interested in the gospel. When none heard, they let him know that they did care about the new religion, only they were afraid of persecution. The threats of the leading men of the village had alarmed them as well as others, and kept them from the place of worship; yet they were eager to learn, and when able asked any who knew about the truth.

At last, after many months of instruction, the first converts at Tay Soa were baptized and admitted to the membership of the Church. It was not thought wise to organize a church at once in the village, so these became members of the second Christian church in Amoy.

That first communion season at Tay Soa was one never to be forgotten by those who there for the first time took the bread and wine in remembrance of Jesus. They had found it trying before to bear

persecution; they had often wished that the Christian life were not such a hard one, but now they felt repaid for all they had suffered. They began to understand how the Lord pays back a hundredfold in this life for what his people lose for his sake.

The converts and inquirers were not all from Tay Soa. Several lived outside of the village, and a few came from the village of Ang Tung Thau, some miles farther north. This was a place of more importance than Tay Soa, on the way to the large walled city of Tang Wan, and only a few miles from it. The missionaries knew of this important city, and were anxiously hoping for some way to be opened that the gospel might be carried to it. The converts at Ang Tung Thau seemed to be marking out the line of that road. It needed no urging to induce the missionaries to try to open a chapel in that village. Before long this was accomplished, and Ang Tung Thau was joined to Tay Soa, the two becoming one charge in the care of a native preacher who lived at Ang Tung Thau, while the chapel-keeper remained at Tay Soa.

As the missionaries hoped and prayed, people from Ang Tung Thau visiting Tang Wan told of the chapel and the religious teacher who lived in their village. So, too, people from that city learned in the village of the new religion, and listened to the teacher, and at length asked for some one for their city.

Ang Tung Thau soon became a very important station. The attendance at the little chapel grew

rapidly, and was soon too large to find room in the building.

"We must have more room," wrote the missionaries to the Church at home. "More people are coming from Tang Wan; and when these and the Tay Soa people join in the Sabbath service the chapel will hardly hold half of them."

Money was sent by the Church in America for building a house of worship at Ang Tung Thau, and as quickly as possible a neat chapel was built for the Christians in that village. The new chapel was large enough to hold all the attendants from Ang Tung Thau, heathen as well as Christian, and it could have held many more than came from Tay Soa, Tang Wan and the village itself. Rising much higher and being considerably larger than any other building in the village, the white walls, the green blinds and the straight roof of the chapel attracted attention at once. Within, its high ceiling, tiled floor and large windows not only give it a cool appearance, but make it a delightfully light and airy house of worship. This substantial chapel, if no misfortune destroys it, will in all probability remain for half a century or more to bless the people of Ang Tung Thau. And yet, if the author does not mistake, its whole cost was only about six hundred dollars.

Reader, few memorials are more useful and lasting in results than schools and churches founded and built in mission-fields.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

SETTLED AT ANG TUNG THAU.

NOW that Ang Tung Thau and Tay Soa had become such important mission-stations, the question with the missionaries was as to whom to put in charge of the places.

"He must be a careful man," said one of the missionaries, "and a man who not only can see far ahead, but be able to manage the people without getting into trouble with the mandarins. We had better not be too fast in deciding on the man; let us try our men for a while and see who is likely to prove the best for the field."

This plan was taken, and one of the older preachers was sent. For a month or more this man remained; then it was thought best to send him to another field even more important than that around Tay Soa. Another of the older preachers was sent to take this man's place. He soon proved that he was better suited to another charge. Thus change after change was made in preachers at the two stations.

"I have been thinking," said one of the missionaries when the subject for a permanent preacher at

the two stations was talked of again, "that we might try Choh Lin. I know it is near his old home, yet that may not be so much against him; indeed, it may be in his favor. Perhaps he can interest some of his old friends and relatives and lead them to become Christians. Choh Lin has been a faithful and judicious man in every place where he has been tried, and I believe that he would do well in the Tay Soa and Ang Tung Thau region. Let us try him."

It was agreed to send the young preacher for a few weeks to those stations, with the understanding that it was to be only until a suitable man could be decided on, so that he might not be disappointed if not continued there. Word was sent to him to come to Amoy to see the missionaries.

"Shall I tell you what for?" asked the man who gave the message. "They mean to send you to your old home. If you do well, they may continue you there; if not, you will be sent to some other station. It is a hard place. The man who goes there must not only be able to take charge of Tay Soa and Ang Tung Thau, but must try to open a station at Tang Wan. If you can do this, the missionaries will think you a number-one good man. Others of us have tried, but we have failed."

"I hardly think they will send me there," answered Choh Lin. "I am neither old enough nor wise enough. Where you have not succeeded I must fail."

When he appeared in the mission-house, Choh Lin was told that the missionaries wanted him to go to take charge of the two stations for a while until permanent arrangements could be made.

"Do you think me able to take charge of such important places?" he asked. "It will be more difficult to do it in and near my old home than among strangers."

"Are you not willing to go?" inquired one of the missionaries.

"It is not for the servant to say where he will or will not go," replied Choh Lin. "Where the Lord has work for me I am ready to go: I only fear that it will need a far better and wiser man than I am to do the work. If you think me fitted, I am willing to go and remain there, and will do my very best, poor as that is, in the work."

"Whether or not you remain will depend on how well you succeed," said a missionary. "You are able to do what we expect of you if you go in the strength of the Lord. It is an important field; it is the key to the large country beyond. We are sorry to take you away again from your family, but until we know what is best to be done it will not be wise to move your family to Ang Tung Thau. While you are there you will be able to come to Amoy often to consult with us regarding your studies, so that you will not be altogether the loser, and in the end you may gain the more."

As Choh Lin's family was increasing, he became

more and more anxious to have a permanent home where he might be with his children and do more to train them in the Christian life.

The missionaries had told the preachers that as the churches became able more pastors would be needed; these would be chosen from the men best fitted by thorough study as well as by God's Spirit for the work. The hope of becoming a pastor was a great inducement to them to study faithfully. As pastors they would not only be settled permanently and receive a larger salary, but their positions would be more honorable. The English Presbyterian and the American missionaries had, with the two native pastors and the Christian churches, formed what the Chinese called the "Tai Hoey," or "great assembly" of churches and ministers; this is like a presbytery. To be able to take a part in the work of the Tai Hoey was the ambition of all the preachers.

After a time the missionaries determined to have a yearly examination of all who had any wish to become pastors, as well as of the students in the two seminaries; for the two missions were now uniting in much of their work. The examination created not a little excitement among the preachers. They saw that their study must not only be real, but such as would bear a close examination by the missionaries. To be stationed so near Amoy that they might come often to the city for help in their studies was the wish of every one of the younger men; and when Choh Lin was told to take a charge

so near the city he was delighted, even though the charge was not permanent. He could easily bring his family down to Amoy, and be with them each week, and thus there would be at once almost as much of a gain as loss. The more he thought of the change, the more pleased he was. But, then, how could he succeed where others who were older had failed? What should he do about Tang Wan? He knew more about that city and the enemies of the gospel there than others did. He had not only heard that the maudarins and the more wealthy and educated people had said that the foreign religion should not be preached in that city, but he knew that they meant what they said and would leave nothing undone to prevent it.

Choh Lin went to Ang Tung Thau with a determination to do his best, and if possible prove himself fitted for the field, so that he might stay. For some weeks he remained, doing the work so well that nothing was said in the mission about a change. There was, however, less need now of a man to manage the affairs for Tang Wan. The missionaries hired a house in the city for a chapel about the time or soon after Choh Lin went to his new field; so that he was relieved from a large share of the work and care that he dreaded.

The story of the renting of this building need not be told: it was the old story of honest, persistent and quiet determination of men who believed themselves doing God's work against hate, cunning

and deceit. The missionaries won not merely because they were honest, but because they were really wiser. Theirs was the wisdom that God gives, and in his strength they trusted. The enemies of the foreign religion were furious when they found all their efforts to keep the foreigners out of the city vain. The house was rented and the lease was not only signed, but had the sanction of the mandarins: to oppose further would be to bring themselves into the hands of the officials. While the mandarins had no more love for the foreign religion than had its most bitter enemies, yet they would have an excuse to demand no small sum of money from any who might attack the chapel of the foreigners. Since the love of money in China is stronger than conscience or enmity to another religion, the haters of foreigners and the gospel contented themselves with attacking Christians rather than their house of worship. As this story is of Choh Lin rather than of the chapel at Tang Wan and the Christians there, the story of their persecutions is left untold.

A preacher was soon placed in that city, and Choh Lin's work was confined to the two stations and the country around them. He was now told that he might remove his family to the house at Ang Tung Thau, and for the present at least live there as the pastor of the two places.

Settled near his old home, with his family around him and preaching the gospel to his old friends and people, Choh Lin was a happy man. He was loved

by his friends, the people under his care loved and trusted him, and he was also a favorite with the missionaries.

Though the two stations had been prosperous before, the coming of Choh Lin to Ang Tung Thau was the beginning of a new time of prosperity. The attendance at the larger chapel steadily increased; so did the number of inquirers, and one by one these were admitted to the communion. Some came on foot fourteen miles nearly every Sabbath to hear the gospel. The service was now held on the Lord's Day at Ang Tung Thau, because the Tay Soa chapel was too small to hold those who came even after the Tang Wan house of worship was opened.

The writer, who had reached Amoy a few months before Choh Lin was settled at Ang Tung Thau, spent a Sabbath at that place not long after the young man was placed in charge, and describes what he saw:

On Saturday evening the people gathered from the village and some distance beyond for evening worship. Perhaps the visit of the young missionary attracted some, and the communion of the morrow drew more than the usual number. At the hour for service the leader rose and read the hymn. At once, as he sat down, a burst of song almost startled the visitor. All seemed to sing, and, while some made their tunes as they went along, most of them sang the tune of the leader, and sang it well.

One or two verses would not suffice: the whole hymn was sung, and then another followed, and still another. The people sang as though they enjoyed it and wanted to keep on. After the hymns came the reading of Scripture with pointed and practical comments, then followed a prayer, and then another song. After the service came an important part of the meeting—the hand-shaking. While this is a custom well worth keeping up in American churches, more than one missionary has wished that it had not been introduced into the churches in China. Don't wonder, reader: Chinese hands are not always clean. But this could not be said of Choh Lin's flock. They were the most cleanly Chinese the writer has ever met. This fact was more evident by daylight the next morning. Each man, woman and child was dressed neatly and in clean clothing, and there was even evidence that some, if not all, had taken a bath.

"How do you manage, Choh Lin," was asked, "to make the people come to church so clean and so neatly dressed?"

"We keep the church clean," was his reply, "and tell the people that they must neither bring dirt into nor be dirty within the house of God. I tell them that nothing that defileth, not even dirt, can enter heaven, and that if they wish to live there they must begin to live cleanly here. People whose hearts God has cleansed should show it not only by clean lives, but by clean bodies."

"How did you induce them to change?"

"I told Christians to set the example; and when one or two came with dirty clothes I asked if they had forgotten that God was expected with us, and if it would not be better to go home and put on their cleanest clothes, and then come back to meet God."

"How did they like that?"

"They went home and put on their clean clothing, and came back not at all offended. It makes a great difference whether we want people to do things for our own or for the Lord's sake. I had but little trouble to persuade them to come clean and neat to meet the Lord."

Before the hour of service on Sabbath morning the chapel was well filled. The time of waiting was spent in singing. One started a hymn, and at once all joined in. The regular service and the sermon were much like such services in our own churches.

The communion of the afternoon was the important service of the day: before that an inquiry-meeting was held, with probably as many as twenty inquirers. Among these was an old woman of more than eighty years. Her form was bent, her face wrinkled, her eyes dim, her ears dull. She seemed anxious to know the truth, but unable to understand it. She was attentive to every word spoken to others, but when questions were put to her she answered, "I am too old to understand. Go to my

daughter" (also among the inquirers); "she is not too old. Tell it all to her; she may become a follower of the true God. It is too late for me; I am too old." Questions were vain: they brought the same answer: "I am too old. Teach the younger ones; it is not too late for them." Her daughter and two others were admitted to the communion, but the old mother was left mourning that the gospel came too late for her.

As Choh Lin was not an ordained preacher, the ordinances were administered by the two missionaries present.

It had been several months since the last celebration of the Lord's Supper at Ang Tung Thau, and the Christians might well say, "With great desire have we longed to eat this supper," and still more might those who for the first time commemorated the dying love of the Lord tell of their wish to take the bread and wine in remembrance of Christ.

As they gathered in the body of the chapel, filling many seats, they presented a sight not soon to be forgotten. Their serious, earnest faces turned to the speaker were a study. Only a few years ago every one of that gathering, the two missionaries excepted, was a heathen. Every lip had prayed to false gods, every knee had bowed to idols, every one had worshiped the spirits of the dead: now all were followers of Christ.

The moments flew swiftly as the missionary told the old, old, yet new, new story of a Saviour's love;

and when all arose to join in the song of consecration the disciples felt that the song was far too short. They wished to consecrate themselves over and over again to such a Saviour as was their Lord. When the bread and wine were in silence distributed each seemed to be in communion with the Lord. To describe that communion or to tell the feelings of the Christians would be an impossibility. There are joys that are unspeakable, and there is a peace that passes understanding. The child of God knows them. That joy and peace were felt at that communion at Ang Tung Thau.

When the services closed a large number of Christians stayed for a talk with the preacher and missionaries.

"Since the Lord has done so much for us, what ought we to do for him?" was asked.

"We should, besides giving ourselves to him, do all we can to tell others about him," was answered.

"Yes," added Choh Lin, "and that is what we must try to do here. We must not only tell others of salvation, but give our money to send the gospel to those who are far away."

"We have not forgotten what you told us the other Sabbath, teacher," said one of the people. "We want to be like our heavenly Father and Saviour—give and sacrifice for the good of those who are far away—but we do not feel sure how much we ought to give. You said that we should do as

the Jews—give one-tenth. Did you mean that we must give one-tenth before or after we buy our rice to eat?"

"Let us ask Tim Lo," was Choh Lin's answer as he turned to a cripple standing near.—"What do you think of it, Brother Tim?"

"I think that we should be honest with the Lord," answered Tim. "If we give him or his work one-tenth, we should do it before taking our own share. It would not be one-tenth if we first paid for our rice from it. Some people might want a great deal of rice; what would become of the Lord's work then?"

"How do you give, Brother Tim?" asked Choh Lin.

"Why, if I earn forty cash a day (but I don't often do it), I take out four first for the Lord, and say that is his; the thirty-six are mine; with those I buy my rice."

From the first the missionaries taught the Christians that it was not only their duty to give for the spread of the gospel, but to support their own pastors. So decided were they in this that until lately no pastor was ordained and settled over a church until the people promised to give him a better salary than preachers supported by the missions received.

Choh Lin was anxious to see Tay Soa and Ang Tung Thau not only prosperous, but united in one and become an organized church, able to call and support their own pastor.

Steady progress was made in the two stations: the members increased in number, and so did the contributions. Before Choh Lin had been two years in charge the two stations applied to the Tai Hoey for an organization into a church. The request was granted, and from the two the church of "Hong San" was formed. But as the people were not able to pay enough to support a pastor, Choh Lin remained the acting pastor. He had, however, in the mean while passed the examinations at Amoy successfully and become a licensed preacher, ready to become a pastor as soon as a church was able to call him. Here he might be left, but his story would not be complete if some of his trials as an acting pastor were not told. These are held for another chapter.

CHAPTER XXIX.

TRIALS OF A PASTOR.

BELOVED by the people under his care, Choh Lin was not without enemies. These were bitter against him, not so much for his own sake as for that of the foreigners and their religion. In China the gospel is hated, not so much because of itself as because it is the religion of foreigners. Such people in and around Ang Tung Thau tried to arouse others against the chapel, its worship and its worshipers. At first they had tried to prevent the building of the chapel; failing in that, they tried to give trouble to the Christians. These enemies of the truth were wealthy and educated, and it is quite probable that they were secretly aided by the lower officials.

As in Ang Tung Thau there were three large idol temples, to have a foreigners' house of worship in their village was felt to be a terrible insult to the gods of the Middle Kingdom. After submitting for some time to the disgrace, as well as risking the anger of the gods, the devout idolaters determined to make a strong effort to drive Christianity from the village. Priests were summoned from other

places, in the hope that they could bring some power to drive out the gospel or induce the gods to destroy the chapel and frighten Christians back to idolatry. Among other efforts for this end, they built a large fire in front of one of the temples, and the priests, after chanting and going through a variety of ceremonies, leaped through this fire, hoping by their earnestness to attract the attention of the gods. At length the ceremonies were ended, and many felt sure that the chapel and Christianity were doomed in that place at least. Day by day the idolaters waited to see an earthquake destroy the chapel or lightning burn it down, or some other destruction come upon it, but they waited in vain. Sabbath after Sabbath the worshipers gathered; they sang, they prayed, they listened to the truth from Choh Lin's lips, and, like their house of worship, remained unharmed.

For a while the idolaters waited hopefully, now and again telling the Christians that the gods would before long prove their power. Growing weary of vain waiting, the idolaters began another course. One day the Ang Tung Thau people were surprised to find posted on the buildings printed placards threatening the enemies of the gods with terrible calamities if they continued to follow the teacher of another religion than that of China. Christians were terrified, and not a few who had become interested in the gospel were frightened away from the chapel-services. Choh Lin and his people knew

very well that those were not meant as idle threats. It was no uncommon thing for a mob to attack and destroy a Christian house of worship, and drive the worshipers from the place or kill them in it. True, such occurrences had been less frequent of late, since, by treaty with foreign nations, the Chinese had been compelled to pay for all damage done by such mobs; yet there were many people willing to run all the risk in order to gratify their hatred to foreigners and their religion.

Many and earnest were the prayers offered by the anxious Christians, great were their fears, yet they stood firm in their faith. It was a time of trial to Choh Lin. He did not know when each morning came but that that day would witness the destruction of the chapel and the scattering of his people. Perhaps night would find their bodies and his lying dead in the streets. Perhaps his wife and children would be torn from him and carried into slavery, and he, left houseless, homeless, bereft of family and friends, forced to hide as a fugitive and an outcast. When weeks passed and the threats had not been carried out, the preacher and his people hoped no harm would come to them. Suddenly they were startled by a new and an unexpected danger.

The missionaries having called the attention of the mandarins to the threatening posters, the people had been warned not to molest the chapel. Not daring to disobey, they sought some other way of

attacking the Christians and frightening others from joining them.

Among the inquirers was a man from a village some distance from Ang Tung Thau. Between that village and a neighboring one there had some time before been trouble, and considerable property had been stolen. That difficulty had never been settled. This man, known here as Lon, was now accused as one of those who had stolen the property. He was arrested and taken to Amoy for trial. He refused to confess himself guilty; no proof being found, there was only one course for the magistrates —to set him free. He had, however, in the trial confessed himself a Christian: this made his accusers the more determined to punish him and the mandarins to listen to other charges. One was speedily brought: he was accused of taking part in a local rebellion fourteen or fifteen years before, and tried for this offence. But as there had been many engaged in the same rebellion, and as it had not amounted to anything, the mandarins dared not convict this man only and so long after the time; therefore he was acquitted at the second trial. Determined not to be defeated in their plans, the enemies of the gospel told the officers that a murder had been committed in this man's village and the murderers never brought to trial. Lon was the third time put on trial, now as a murderer to be tried for his life. Had he been convicted on either of the other charges, he would probably have been

executed. If proved guilty of this crime, he *must* die.

As soon as Choh Lin learned of Lon's arrest he hurried to Amoy to do what he could to aid this one of his flock. It became evident that not justice, but Lon's death, was the object of the accusers; and this not so much from hatred to the man as to the foreigners and their religion. Further, Choh Lin learned that they hoped by killing this man to frighten others who were interested in the gospel, and perhaps drive the gospel entirely from Ang Tung Thau. The young preacher told the missionaries his fears, and the advice and aid of the American consul, Gen. Legendre, were sought. He at once requested the mandarins to give Lon a fair trial. Angry at the consul, at the missionaries and at everything foreign, the mandarins, instead of granting a trial or summoning witnesses, ordered the accused to be compelled to make a confession.

Lon's hands were held together, a close-fitting ring forced over a finger of each, a stick placed between his hands, and by that he was suspended. For six hours he was left to hang in agony, his whole weight supported by the two fingers. In the mean while he was beaten several times and told to confess the part he had in the murder. Again and again he declared his innocence: at last he was taken down.

Word of this cruelty reaching the ears of Gen. Legendre, he tried to prevent it, but to no purpose.

The next day poor Lon was put to the same torture and beaten more severely than before to make him confess guilt. Weak and faint, he still insisted that he had nothing to do with the murder. After being hung as before for several hours, he was again taken down and locked up alone in the prison. The third day he was subjected to the same torture. Hopeless and almost dead from pain and suffering, he groaned out that he was present when the murder was committed, though he did not say that he had anything to do with it. This, however, was enough. He was taken down and again shut up in the prison.

Meanwhile, Gen. Legendre had forced the mandarins to consent to a fair trial, and it had been agreed that Lon should be tried on the day following the one on which the poor man had made the confession. Early that morning, several hours before the time set for the trial, the accused was hurried from the prison to the execution-ground and beheaded. When the time for trial came the man was dead and the enemies of foreigners and their religion had conquered.

It was sad news to the Christians of Ang Tung Thau that their leader brought. All felt sure that Lon had been killed because he was a Christian, and they asked each other who would be the next victim. Lon's death, however, probably saved them. The American consul would not allow such a case of cruelty and the murder of a Christian to go by without protesting to the Chinese government.

Probably that had the effect to make the mandarins careful how they beheaded any more Christians. They, in turn, no doubt warned the people, for after Lon's death the enemies of Christianity were much more quiet.

For a while those who had attended the chapel-service, yet had given no proof of being Christians, remained away; but one after another came back, and the number was even larger than before. Everything seemed to show that the Christians were likely to have little more persecution.

One day a startling story was told in the streets. White ants, it was said, had quietly eaten the wood-work of all the temples, and each was ready to crumble. This is not an uncommon thing in China. These little insects find their way into the timber and destroy all but the outside. This is done so quietly and quickly that often the first sign of their presence is the sudden falling in of roof and floors of a house, leaving only the walls standing. People crowded to the temples to look at the ruin the ants had wrought. Ants were in two of the buildings, but the story was proven to be worse than the reality. By taking out the eaten timbers the temples could yet be saved. Priests came to take charge of the repairs, but on their examining the idols they made a more alarming discovery. Several of the idols carved from wood had been eaten by the ants. This was indeed a calamity to the idolaters. The priests at once told them that the spirits of the gods

had left the idols and deserted the village. The reason was plain: the gods would not stay where a chapel of a foreign god was allowed.

The words of the priests excited the crowd, and a fanatical idolater by a speech aroused the people to such a degree that they were ready for anything. The end might have been the destruction of the chapel had it not been for a shrewd old man in the gathering. He was not a Christian, nor did he even attend the chapel-service, so none suspected him of being a friend of the gospel. "What kind of gods have we in our village," asked he, "if they are driven away by a single foreign chapel and nothing but the foreigners' religion?"

"What do you mean?" inquired a priest.

"Gods who cannot protect themselves can give our village but little protection," was the reply.

"They are able to protect both themselves and us," said the priest sharply. "They left because unwilling to stay where the people do not want them."

"We do want them to stay," spoke the man quietly, "but we would like to see them able to take care of us."

"They will stay if that chapel is taken away," shouted the fanatic, "but otherwise not."

"If the chapel of the foreigners troubles the gods, why cannot they remove it, instead of asking us to do it?" asked the old man. "They can do it very easily, but we will get into trouble if we at-

tempt it. They certainly are stronger than we, and stronger no doubt than the foreign God. Let them show him what they can do."

It was useless for the friends of the gods to reply to this man. His questions troubled the priests and quieted the people. Especially did the people grow quiet when the man asked who would pay for the chapel if torn down.

The storm that rose so suddenly soon passed away, and the chapel remained. The devout idolaters insisted that some judgment would fall upon Ang Tung Thau for allowing the foreign God to be worshiped there. As no special calamity came, the temples, beyond the most necessary repairs, remained as they were, and for a time the gods were allowed to remain away from the village.

But, as this story is growing too long, the rest of Choh Lin's trials are untold, and with two incidents that are more pleasing the story will close.

Among the new-comers Choh Lin noticed one day an old man, who hurried away after service. This continued for some time. At first Choh Lin did not try to speak to him, lest he should be frightened away, but as he came week after week the preacher inquired more about him. One week he visited the old man's home, some miles away. He asked one or two of the neighbors regarding him. They said that of late he had given up the worship of idols and spirits, and, instead, prayed to an unknown and unseen god. Whenever he prayed, which was

very often, they said he first sounded a gong, and then kneeling down with upturned face and closed eyes prayed at nothing.

Calling on the old man, Choh Lin learned that he had given up idolatry for the worship of the true God, of whom he had heard and whom he had learned to love in the Ang Tung Thau chapel.

"Do you sound a gong before you pray?" asked the preacher.

"Certainly," was the reply; "I always do."

"Why do you do that?"

"'Why'?" repeated the old man in surprise. "Don't you always begin worship in the chapel by sounding the gong?"

Choh Lin understood it now. The gong—one having a much more agreeable sound than the gongs we hear in America—is usually sounded in front of Christian chapels in China, as bells are rung with us before service to call people to church. The old man thought that sounding the gong was part of the worship of the true God.

"God does not need a gong to call him to listen to our prayers," said Choh Lin, "as the idolaters say their gods need to be called. The true God knows all that is going on in the world around and in our hearts."

"Yes, you told us that some weeks ago in the chapel," spoke the old man. "But I heard the gong sounded before the service, so thought that it had something to do with pleasing God. I want

to please him. I did not know exactly how to worship him, and did as others do who know better than I."

Choh Lin learned that this old man had been, through his preaching, led to give up idols and become a worshiper of the true God, and before long he had the pleasure of seeing him a follower of the Saviour and a member of the Church.

Thus not only in but out of the chapel and outside of the village did the young preacher teach men of the Saviour.

In a village some distance from Ang Tung Thau, as well as from Tay Soa, lived an old uncle of Choh Lin. As a boy the latter had been a great favorite of this uncle. His mother had taken him, a short time before Mr. Lee died, to see this uncle, who was then very sick. This visit pleased the old man very much, and he remembered the boy and his mother as his best friends. He always held a deep interest in Choh Lin as he grew to be a man, and was ready to do any favor he could for his nephew. When news came to him that Choh Lin had become a Christian, the old man was greatly troubled. He went to see his nephew and Mrs. Lee, and begged them not to give up the religion of their fathers for that of strangers. Although his advice was unheeded, the old man remained a firm friend of his nephew. When Choh Lin became a preacher at Ang Tung Thau, he visited his uncle, and the two had a long talk about the gospel.

The old man was well educated and loved to talk and read. "What a pity, Choh Lin," said he, "that you will remain a Christian and preach that foreign doctrine! You have a good education and fine abilities: if you would study the Chinese classics and take the regular course of students, you would graduate with great honors and become a noted scholar and perhaps a high officer. But, alas! you follow the doctrine of those foreigners, and now there is no hope. You throw everything away for that. Yet what good will it ever do you or your friends?"

Choh Lin said that his life was much happier now than when he served false gods, and tried to reason with his uncle on the folly of idolatry; but the talk seemed to have little effect on the old man, who was unwilling to be convinced by a youth who had only studied at the school of foreigners.

Choh Lin visited his uncle as often as he could, and each time found him more ready to talk about Christianity. From opposing it he contented himself with speaking well of the religion and the books of China. "Those books," said he, "are far better than the books written in other countries. If you must teach a foreign religion, why not teach our own as well, and specially teach the more worthy truths in our books? The foreign God no doubt is good, but ours are better. Why not, then, take the best, instead of teaching the people to serve an inferior god? You are only helping

the foreigners to take possession of our country some day."

When Choh Lin read some passages from the Bible, and, comparing them with the writings of Confucius, asked, "Which of these will be likely to do our countrymen the most good—the teachings of the foreign book or those of the Middle Kingdom?" the old man was silent.

At another time he admitted that the Bible was a very good book, and was willing to take and read it. The next time Choh Lin came the old man said, "That sacred book of the foreigners is very good. It will do no harm, but very much good. It is an excellent book for some people, but for me, who have lived a virtuous life, the Chinese books are better." He, however, did not wish his nephew to take the Bible away, and said that he had not read all in it that he wished to know.

At Choh Lin's next visit the uncle did not compare it with the books of China, but said a great deal about the Bible. "It is the book for my family," said he; "I want my children to read it. The doctrines it teaches are just what they need. If they will read and obey its doctrines, I will not object even though they become Christians. That book will make them better men and women, and better citizens of the Middle Kingdom." He, however, did not understand all, and had many questions to ask.

At Choh Lin's next visit the old man said, "That holy book is the book for me: it has the food for

my soul. Other books do well for the body and mind, but this has truths that go to the heart. Old as I am, I mean to serve the one true God and give myself to Jesus as my Saviour."

There was now perfect sympathy between Choh Lin and the old man as the younger told the other more plainly the way of salvation.

The next time Choh Lin called his uncle was sick, too sick to talk much, and a few days later word came to Ang Tung Thau that he was dead.

"Oh," said Choh Lin to the author a short time after the uncle's death, "if I had only been more faithful in prayer as well as teaching, I would have more assurance that my kind and loving uncle is saved, but now I am not sure; I only hope."

Several if not all of that uncle's family became Christians after his death, and at least one of the sons became a preacher of the gospel.

Here, as he was in 1870, we leave Choh Lin, though he is yet living and a preacher. This true story of his life is not unlike those of many other as faithful men as he was, who are giving their all to the work of bringing their countrymen to Christ. These men need help in their work. Will you, reader, give it? They need more foreign teachers, more money, more prayer. You can give the last; you perhaps can give some of the second, and, it may be, can give the first. Will you give as you are able?

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